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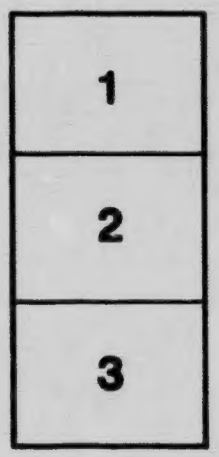

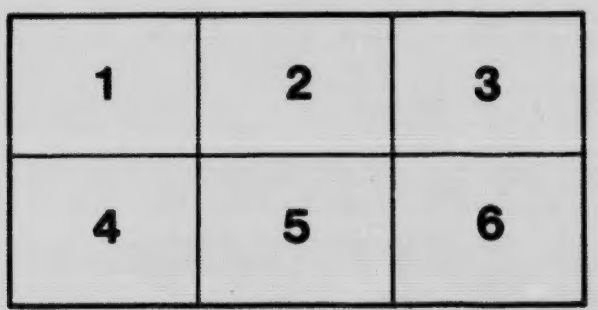

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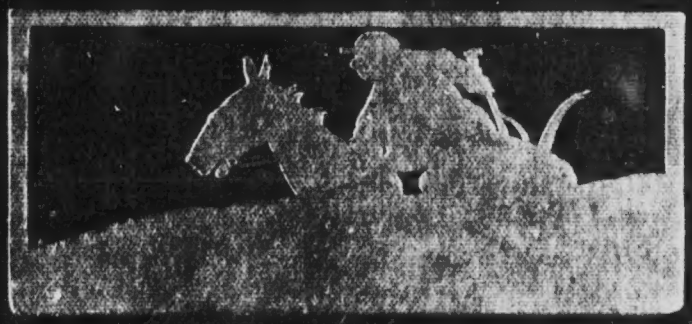
HUNTS WITH JORROCKS

ILLUSTRATED IN COLOUR BY

G. DENHOLM ARMOUR



HUNTS WITH JORROCKS

Printed in 1908

'Werry good indeed—most beautiful, in fact—wot honour I arrive at!' *Page* 12

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HUNTS WITH JORROCKS

FROM *HANDLEY CROSS* BY ROBERT SURTEES

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

G. DENHOLM ARMOUR

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TORONTO
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INTRODUCTION

SURTEES, in writing an introduction to *Handley Cross* in 1854, said, 'The reader will have the kindness to bear in mind that the work merely professes to be a tale, and does not aspire to the dignity of a novel.'

However this may be, few books can so well be taken up at any part and read without respect to the story as *Handley Cross*. No apology is therefore needed for collecting into a separate volume some of Mr. Jorrocks's 'Hunts,' possibly the best descriptions of hunting ever written.

Surtees created the great character of Mr. Jorrocks, and Leech ably translated the hero into pictorial form.

The Jorrocks so evolved has almost become an historical personage. And no more could a

new Jorrocks be created than a new 'Mr. Punch,' therefore the acknowledgments of a modern illustrator are due to John Leech as well as to Surtees, the original creators of 'Jorrocks and his deathless train.'

G. D. A.

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CHAPTER I

MR. JORROCKS

'A man he was to all the country dear.'

'WHERE can that be from, Binjimin?' inquired Mr. Jorrocks of his boy of all work, as the latter presented him with a large double-headed letter, with a flourishing coat of arms seal.

Mr. Jorrocks was a great city grocer of the old school, one who was neither ashamed of his trade, nor of carrying it on in a dingy warehouse that would shock the managers of the fine mahogany-countered, gilt-canistered, puffing, poet-keeping establishments of modern times. He had been in business long enough to remember each succeeding lord mayor before he was anybody—'reglar little tuppences in fact,' as he used to say. Not that Mr. Jorrocks decried the dignity

of civic honour, but his ambition took a different turn. He was for the field, not the forum.

As a merchant he stood high—country traders took his teas without tasting, and his bills were as good as bank-notes. Though an unlettered man he had great powers of thought and expression in his peculiar way. He was 'highly respectable,' as they say on 'Change—that is to say, he was very rich, the result of prudence and economy—not that he was stingy, but his income outstripped his expenses, and money like snow rolls up amazingly fast.

A natural born sportsman, his lot being cast behind a counter instead of in the country, is one of those frolics of fortune that there is no accounting for. To remedy the error of the blind goddess, Mr. Jorrocks had taken to hunting as soon as he could keep a horse, and though his exploits were long confined to the suburban county of Surrey, he should rather be 'credited' for keenness in following the sport in so unpropitious a region, than 'debited' as a Cockney and laughed

at for his pains. But here the old adage of 'where ignorance is bliss,' etc., came to his aid, for before he had seen any better country than Surrey, he was impressed with the conviction that it was the 'werry best,' and their hounds the finest in England.

'Doesn't the best of everything come to London?' he would ask, 'and doesn't it follow as a nattaral consequence, that the best 'unting is to be had from it?'

Moreover, Mr. Jorrocks looked upon Surrey as the peculiar province of Cockneys—we beg pardon—Londoners. His earliest recollections carried him back to the days of Alderman Harley, and though his participation in the sport consisted in reading the meets in a bootmaker's window in the Borough, he could tell of all the succeeding masters, and criticise the establishments of Clayton, Snow, Maberly, and the renowned Daniel Haigh.

It was during the career of the latter great sportsman, that Mr. Jorrocks shone a brilliant meteor in the Surrey hunt—he was no rider, but

with an almost intuitive knowledge of the run of a fox, would take off his hat to him several times in the course of a run. No Saturday seemed perfect unless Mr. Jorrocks was there; and his great chestnut horse, with his master's coat-laps flying out beyond his tail, will long be remembered on the outline of the Surrey hills. These are recollections that many will enjoy, nor will their interest be diminished as time throws them back in the distance. Many bold sportsmen, now laid on the shelf, and many a bold one still going, will glow with animation at the thoughts of the sport they shared in with him.

Of the start before daybreak—the cries of the cads—the mirth of the lads—the breakfasts at Croydon—the dear 'Derby Arms,'—the cheery Charley Morton; then the ride to the meet—the jovial greeting—the glorious find, and the exhilarating scrambles up and down the Surrey hills.—Then if they killed!—O, joy! unutterable joy! How they holloaed! How they hooped! How they lugged out their half-crowns for Tom Hill,

and returned to town flushed with victory and *eau-de-vie.*

But we wander—

When the gates of the world were opened by railways, our friend's active mind saw that business might be combined with pleasure, and as first one line opened and then another, he shot down into the different countries—bags and all—Beckford in one pocket—order book in the other—hunting one day and selling teas another. Nay, he sometimes did both together, and they tell a story of him in Wiltshire, holloaing out to a man who had taken a fence to get rid of him, 'Did you say *two* chests o' black and *one* o' green?'

Then when the Great Northern opened he took a turn down to Peterborough, and emboldened by what he saw with Lord Fitzwilliam, he at length ventured right into the heaven of heavens—the grass—or what he calls the 'cut 'em down' countries.[1] What a commotion he caused! Which

[1] 'Cut 'em down and hang 'em up to dry.'—*Leicestershire phrase.*

is Jorrocks? Show me Jorrocks! Is that old Jorrocks! and men would ride to and fro eyeing him as if he were a wild beast. Gradually the bolder ventured a word at him—observed it was a fine day—asked him how he liked their country? or their hounds. Next, perhaps, the M. F. H. would give him a friendly lift—say 'good-morning, Mr. Jorrocks'—then some of what Jorrocks calls the 'hupper crusts' of the hunt would begin talking to him, until he got fairly launched among them—when he would out with his order book and do no end of business in tea. None but Jorrocks and Co.'s tea goes down in the midland counties. Great, however, as he is in the country, he is equally famous in London, where his 'Readings in Beckford' and sporting lectures in Oxenden Street procured him the attentions of the police.

Mr. Jorrocks had now passed the grand climacteric, and balancing his age with less accuracy than he balanced his books, called himself somewhere between fifty and sixty. He wouldn't own to three pund, as he called sixty, at any price.

Neither could he ever be persuaded to get into the scales to see whether he was nearer eighteen 'stun' or twenty. He was always ''ticlarly engaged' just at the time, either goin' to wet samples of tea with his traveller, or with some one to look at 'an oss,' or, if hard pressed, to take Mrs. J. out in the chay. 'He didn't ride stipple chases,' he would say, 'and wot matter did it make ow much he weighed? It was altogether 'twixt him and his oss, and weighin' wouldn't make him any lighter.' In person he was a stiff, square-built, middle-sized man, with a thick neck and a large round head. A woolly broad-brimmed lowish-crowned hat sat with a jaunty side-long sort of air upon a bushy nut-brown wig, worn for comfort and not deception. Indeed his grey whiskers would have acted as a contradiction if he had, but deception formed no part of Mr. Jorrocks's character. He had a fine open countenance, and though his turn-up nose, little grey eyes, and rather twisted mouth, were not handsome, still there was a combination of fun and

good-humour in his looks that pleased at first sight, and made one forget all the rest. His dress was generally the same—a puddingey white neckcloth tied in a knot, capacious shirt frill (shirt made without collars), a single-breasted high-collared buff waistcoat with covered buttons, a blue coat with metal ones, dark blue stockingnet pantaloons, and hessian boots with large tassels, displaying the liberal dimensions of his full, well-turned limbs. The coat pockets were outside, and the back buttons far apart.

His business place was in St. Botolph's Lane, in the City, but his residence was in Great Coram Street. This is rather a curious locality,—city people considering it west, while those in the west consider it east. The fact is, that Great Coram Street is somewhere about the centre of London, near the London University, and not a great way from the Euston station of the Birmingham railway. Jorrocks says it is close to the two best cover hacks in the world, the Great Northern and Euston stations. Approaching it from the east, which

The Italian plaster of Paris poll-parrot merchant. *Page* 21

seems the proper way of advancing to a city man's residence, you pass the Foundling Hospital in Guildford Street, cross Brunswick Square, and turning short to the left you find yourself in 'Great Coram Street.' Neat unassuming houses form the sides, and the west end is graced with a building that acts the double part of a reading-room and swimming-bath; 'literature and lavement' is over the door.

'Where can this be from, Binjimin?' inquired Mr. Jorrocks, taking the letter before mentioned as he sat in his red morocco hunting-chair in the back drawing-room in Great Coram Street.

''Andley Cross! Where is that?' said he, looking at the post-mark. 'Knows no one there, I think,' continued he, cutting the paper on each side of the seal with a pair of large scissors kept in the capacious black inkstand before him. Having opened the envelope, a large sheet of white paper and a gilt-edged pink satin-paper note, headed with an embossed stag-hunt, presented themselves. He opened the note first.

The writing was unknown to him, so he took up the other, and folding it out, proceeded to read the contents. Thus it ran :—

TO JOHN JORROCKS, ESQ.

'Honoured Sir,

'The committee of management of the Handley Cross foxhounds being under the necessity of relinquishing their undertaking, we, the undersigned keen and determined sportsmen, having experienced the evils of a divided mastership, and feeling fully impressed with the importance of having a country hunted single-handed by a gentleman of known talent and experience, who will command the respect and obedience of his followers and the admiration of the world, look up to you, sir, as pre-eminently qualified for the distinguished, honourable, and much coveted situation.'

'My vig!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, jumping from his chair, slapping his thigh, and hopping round the table, taking up three or four holes of his face with delight—'My vig! who would have ever thought of such a thing!—O, John Jorrocks! John Jorrocks! you are indeed a most fortunate man! a most lucky dog! O dear! O dear! Was ever anything so truly delightful!' Some seconds

elapsed ere our worthy friend could compose himself sufficiently to look again at the letter. At last he resumed:—

'When we consider, sir,' it continued, 'the brilliant position you have long achieved in that most illustrious of all hunts, "the Surrey," and the glorious character you have gained as an ardent admirer of field sports, we feel most deeply and sincerely sensible that there is no one to whom we can more safely confide this important trust than yourself.'

'Capital! bravo! werry good indeed!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, laying down the letter again for the purpose of digesting what he had read. 'Capital, indeed,' he repeated, nursing one leg over the other, and casting his eyes up at a dirty fly-catcher dangling over his head. Thus he sat for some moments in mute abstraction. At length he let down his leg and took up the letter.

'In conclusion, sir,' it ended, 'we beg to assure you that you possess alike the confidence and esteem of the inhabitants of this town and neighbourhood; and in the event of your acceding to our wishes, and becoming the manager of our magnificent hunt, we pledge ourselves to afford you our most

cordial and strenuous support, and to endeavour by every means in our power to make you master of the Handley Cross foxhounds, at the smallest possible expense and inconvenience to yourself.

(Signed) MISERRIMUS DOLEFUL, M. C.,
Captain Half-pay.
DUNCAN NEVIN.
ALFRED BOLTEM.
SIMON HOOKEM.
WALTER FLEECEALL.
JUDAS TURNBILL.
MICHAEL GRASPER.'

'Capital, indeed!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, laying down the letter, clapping and rubbing his hands; 'werry good indeed—most beautiful, in fact—wot honour I arrive at!—wonder what these chaps are now!' added he; saying which, in taking up the letter his eye caught the pink satin-paper note. It was in the same fine lady-like running hand as the letter, and purported to be from Captain Doleful, explanatory of their motives, and vouching for the respectability of himself and brother requisitionists. Mr. Jorrocks was all delight, and being the child of impulse and

generous feelings, his joy found vent in stamping on the floor, thereby summoning his servant the aforesaid Benjamin into his presence.

Benjamin, or Binjimin, as Mr. Jorrocks pronounced the name, was one of those mischievous urchins that people sometimes persuade themselves do the work of a man without the wages. He was a stunted, pasty-faced, white-headed, ginnified boy, that might be any age from eight to eighteen, and as idle and mischievous a brat as it was possible to conceive; sharp as a needle, and quick as lightning, he was far more than a match for his over-easy master, whom he cheated and deceived in every possible way. Whatever went wrong, Benjamin always had an excuse for it, which generally transferred the blame from his own to some one else's shoulders,—a piece of ingenuity which required no small degree of dexterity, inasmuch as the light-porter of the warehouse, Betsey, a maid of all work, and a girl under her, were all he had to divide it among. Not a note came into the house, or a letter went

out of it, but Benjamin mastered its contents; and Mrs. Jorrocks was constantly losing things out of the store-room and closets, which never could be traced to anybody.

One unlucky Sunday morning, indeed, Mr. Jorrocks happened to turn back suddenly on his way to church, and caught him sitting in his easy-chair at the breakfast-table, reading *Bell's Life in London*, and scooping the marmalade out of the pot with his thumb, when he visited Benjamin's back with a summary horse-whipping; but that was the only time, during a period of three years, that he ever was caught in a scrape he could not get out of. This might be partly attributable to Betsey finding it convenient to be in with Benjamin, who winked at the visits of a genteel young man from a neighbouring haberdasher's. The poor maid under Betsey, and the light-porter, who was generally absent, were therefore the usual scape-goats, or somebody else's servant, who had happened to come with a message or parcel. Such was Mr. Jorrocks's domestic establishment,

which, like most masters, he either thought, or affected to think, very perfect.

We left our friend stamping for Benjamin, who made his appearance as soon as he could slip downstairs and come up again, he having been watching his master through the keyhole since delivering the letter.

. . . . . .

'Now, Binjimin,' said Mr. Jorrocks, eyeing him with one of his benevolent looks, and not knowing exactly what to say; 'now, Binjimin,' he repeated, 'are the 'osses all right?'

'Yes, sir, and the wehicle too.'

'Werry good,' replied Mr. Jorrocks—'werry good,' taking a half-emptied pot of Lazenby's marmalade out of a drawer in his library table. 'See now! there's a pot of marme*lad* for you!' (Mr. Jorrocks had the knack of making the most of what he did, and treated the half pot as a whole one) 'and mind be a good *bouy*, and I make no doubt you'll rise to be a werry great man—nothing gains man or *bouy* the respect and esteem

of the world so much as honesty, sobriety, and cleanliness.'

Mr. Jorrocks paused.—He would have finished with a moral, wherein his own fortune should have furnished the example, but somehow or other he could not turn it at the moment, so after scrutinising Benjamin's dirty face for a second, he placed the marmalade pot in his hand, and said, 'Now go and wesh your mug.'

'Talliho! talliho! hoop! hoop! hoop! away! away! away!' holloaed Mat Maltby.
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CHAPTER II

MR. JORROCKS'S JOURNAL

A PAGE or two from Mr. Jorrocks's J. rnal, which he has kindly placed at our disposal, will perhaps best elucidate the doings of the early days of his reign over the Handley Cross foxhounds.

'*Saturday.*—Awoke with desperation 'ead ach —"Dragon" brandy carn't be good—Dreamed the Lily-vite-sand train had run off with me, and chucked me into the channel—Called to Binjimin —the boy snorin' sound asleep!—only think, snorin' *sound asleep*, the werry mornin' after comin' down to whip into a pack of fox'ounds—fear he has no turn for the chase. Pulled his ears, and axed him what he was snorin' for. Swore he wasn't snorin!—Never heard a boy of his size tell

such a lie in my life. Rigged for 'unting, only putting on my hat 'stead of my cap,—and on 'orseback by daylight — Xerxes full of fun— Arterxerxes dullish—Bin. rode the latter, in his new tops and spurs—"Now," said I to Bin. as we rode to the kennel, "you are hentering upon a most momentous crisis—If you apply yourself diligently and assiduously to your callin', and learn to be useful in kennel, and to cheer the 'ounds with a full melodious woice—such a woice, in fact, as the tall lobster-merchant with the green plush breeches and big calves, that comes along our street of a still evenin', with his basket on his 'ead, cryin', 'LOB-*sters*! fine LOB-*sters*!' has, there is no sayin' but in course of time you may arrive at the distinguished 'onour of readin' an account of your doin's in *Bell's Life* or the *Field*; but if you persist in playin' at marbles, chuck farthin', and flyin' kites, 'stead of attendin' in the stable, I'll send you back to the charity school from whence you came, where you'll be rubbed down twice a day with an oak towel, and

kept on chick-weed and grunsell like a canary-bird,—mark my words if I von't."

'Found Mat Maltby at the kennel weshin' the flags with a new broom, and 'issing for 'ard life—werry curious it is, wet or dry, soft or 'ard, these chaps always 'iss. 'Ounds all delighted to see me—stood up in my stirrups looking over the rails, 'olloain', cheerin', and talkin' to them. Yoicks Dexterous! Yoicks Luckey-lass! Yoicks Rallywood! Good dog. Threw bits of biscuit as near each of them as I could pitch them, calling the 'ounds by name, to let them see that I knew them—Some caught it in their mouths like Hindian jugglers—"Let 'em out, Mat," at last cried I, when back went the bolt, open went the door, and out they rushed full cry, like a pent-up 'urricane, tearin' down Hexworthy Street into Jireth Place, through Mornington Crescent, by the Bramber Promenade into the High Street, and down it with a crash and melody of sweet music that roused all the old water-drinkin' maids from their pillows, galvanised the watchmen, astonished the

gas-light man, who was making way for daylight, and reg'larly rousing the whole inhabitants of the place.

'Clapt spurs on Xerxes and arter them, holloain' and cra n' my whip, but deuce a bit did they 'eed me—on they went! sterns up and 'eads too, towlin', and howlin', and chirpin', as though they had a fox afore them. Butchers' dogs, curs, setters, mastiffs, mongrels of all sorts and sizes, flew out as they went, some joinin' cry, others worryin' and fightin' their way, but still the body of the pack kept movin' onward at a splittin' pace, down the London Road, as wild as hawks, without turning to the right or the left, until they all flew, like a flock of pigeons, clean out of sight. "Oh, dear! oh, dear!" cried I, pullin' up, fairly exhausted, at the third milestone, by the cross-roads from Cadger's House and Knowlton, "I've lost my 'ounds, and I'm ruined for ever." "Blow your 'orn!" cried a countryman who was sittin' on the stone, "they are not far afore you, and the dogs not far afore them": but blow me tight,

I was so blown myself, that I couldn't raise a puff—easier to blow one's 'orse than one's 'orn. To add to my grief and infinite mortification, Binjimin came poundin' and clatterin' along the hard road, holloain' out as he went, "Buy Lob-*ster-r*! fine Lob-*ster-r-r*!"

'The pack had turned down Greenford Lane, and I jogged after them, sorely puzzled, and desperate perplexed. On I went for a mile or more, when the easterly breeze bore the 'ounds' cry on its wings, and pushin' forward, I came to a corner of the road, where the beauties had thrown up short before an Italian plaster of Paris poll-parrot merchant, who, tray on head, had the whole pack at bay around him, bellowin' and howlin' as though they would eat him. "Get round them, Binjimin," cried I, "and flog them away to me," and takin' out my 'orn, I blew for 'ard life, and what with view halloas, and cheerin', and coaxin', with Bin. at their sterns, succeeded in gettin' most of them back to their kennel. Plaster of Paris poll-parrot merchant followed all

the way, indulgin' in frightful faces and an unknown tongue.'

The Journal then branches off into a mem. of what he did at breakfast in the eating line, how he paid his bill at the 'Dragon,' after disputing the brandy items, adding that though attendance was charged in the bill, the servants all evinced a disposition to shake hands with him at parting, which he thought was making matters worse instead of better. He also recorded how he moved to Diana Lodge, which he did not find so commodious as he expected. The day's entry closes with a mem. that he had stewed beef-steaks for dinner.

'*Sunday.* — Up by cock-crow, and into the kennel. Dexterous and Mercury been fightin' about a bone, and Mercury got a bloody ear. Lector'd Bin. and Mat upon the unpropriety of leavin' bones about. Made Bin. call over the 'ounds by name, double-thongin' him when he made a mistake.

'Mrs. Jorrocks in a desperation fidget to get

to church. Never know'd her so keen afore. Secret out—got a new gown, and a bonnet like a market gardener's flower basket. With all her keenness contrived to start just as the bells gave over ringin'—Beadle, in blue and gold, with a cocked 'at on his head, and a white wand in his hand, received us at the door, and handed us over to the sexton, in deep blue, bound with black velvet, who paraded us up the 'isle, and placed us with much clatterin' in the seat of honour just afore the pulpit. Church desperate full, and every eye turned on the M. F. H.—Mrs. J. thought they were lookin' at her! poor deluded body. Belinda, dressed in lavender, and lookin' werry wholesome. Lessons long—sermon excellent—all about 'onering one's superiors, meaning the M. F. H. doubtless.

'After church, friend Miserrimus came and shook 'ands with us all round. Gave him "unbounded pleasure" to see us all so bloomin' and well. Mrs. J. delighted, and axed him to dine. Five, and no waitin'. Walked down High Street.

Mrs. Jorrocks on one arm, Belinda on t' other. Doleful in the gutter. Fine thing to be a great man. Everybody stared—many took off their 'ats. —Country people got off the flags. "That's Mr. Jorrocks," said one. "Which?" cried another. "Do show him to me," begged a third. "Jorrocks for ever!" cried the children. Nothing like being a great man. Kennel at two—feedin'-time—plaster of Paris poll-parrot merchant outside, still in a great rage, but didn't catch what he said. Many people came and wondered how I knew the names of the 'ounds—all so much alike, they said, Take them a lifetime to know them. Miserable ignoramuses.

'*Monday.*—At the kennel by daylight. Binjimin, as usual, to be kicked awake. The bouy seems to take no interest in the thing. Fear all the lickin' in the world von't drive a passion for the chase into him. Threatened to cut his coat into ribbons on his back, if he didn't look lively. Mat Maltby recommended the 'ounds to be coupled this time—condescended to take his advice. Told

Bang, *the horse shot past Mr. Jorrocks, Benjamin screaming, yelling, and holding on by the mane.* *Page* 31

Bin. not to cry "boil'd Lob-*sters*" as he did on Saturday, but to sing out in a cheerful woice, rich and melodious, *like* the boiled-lobster merchant. Axed what to sing out? Why, "get on 'ounds," ven 'ounds 'ang (hang) back, and "gently there!" when they gets too far forward, said I. Put Xerxes' head towards kennel door this time, instead of from it. Worth a golden sovereign of any man's money to see 'ounds turn out of kennel. Sich a cry! sich music! old Dexterous jumped up at Xerxes, and the hanimal all but kicked me over his 'ead. Pack gathered round me, some jumpin' up against the 'oss's side, others standin' bayin', and some lookin' anxiously in my face, as much as to say, which way this time, Mr. Jorrocks? Took them a good long strong trot to the pike, near Smarden, and round by Billingbrook, letting them see the de- in Chidfold Park. Quite steady —make no doubt they will be a werry superior pack in less than no time—make them as handy as ladies'-maids,—do everything but pay their own pikes in fact. Wonder Doleful don't ride out.

Keen sportsman like him, one would think would like to see the 'ounds.'

The Journal proceeds in this strain for two or three days more, Mr. Jorrocks becoming better satisfied with his pack each time he had them out. On the Friday he determined on having a bye-day on the following one, for which purpose he ordered his secretary to be in attendance, to show him a likely find in a country where he would not disturb many covers. Of course the meet was to be kept strictly private, and of course, like all 'strict secrets,' Fleeceall took care to tell it to half the place. Still, as it was a 'peep-of-day affair,' publicity did not make much matter, inasmuch as few of the Handley Cross gentry loved hunting better than their beds.

Fleeceall's situation was rather one of difficulty, for he had never been out hunting but once, and that once was in a gig, but knowing, as Dr. Johnson said, that there are 'two sorts of information, one that a man carries in his head, and the other that he knows where to get'; nothing daunted by

the mandate, he repaired to Mat Maltby, the elder, a cunning old poacher, who knew every cover in the county, upon whose recommendation it was arranged that a bag-fox, then in the possession of a neighbour, should be shook in South Grove, a long slip of old oak, with an excellent bottom for holding a fox. All things being thus arranged, as Mr. Jorrocks conceived, with the greatest secrecy, he went to bed early, and long before it was light, he lay tumbling and tossing about, listening to the ticking of the clock below, and the snoring of Benjamin above.

At last day began to dawn, and having sought Ben's room and soused the boy with a pitcher of cold water, Mr. Jorrocks proceeded to jump into his hunting clothes, consisting of a roomy scarlet coat, with opossum pockets and spoon cuffs, drab shags, and mahogany-coloured tops. Arrived at the kennel, he found Fleeceall there, on his old gig mare, with his hands stuck in the pockets of a dirty old mackintosh, which completely enveloped his person. 'Is Miserrimus

'ere?' inquired Mr. Jorrocks, all fuss and flurry on discovering the person of his secretary. 'Well, carn't wait—sorry for it—know better another time'; and thereupon he ordered out the horses, gave Ben a leg up on to Xerxes, mounted Arterxerxes himself, the hounds were unkennelled with a melodious rush, and desiring Fleeceall to lead the way, Mr. Jorrocks got the glad pack about him, and went away for South Grove, with a broad grin of satisfaction on his jolly face.

The day seemed auspicious, and there was a balmy freshness in the air that promised well for scent. Added to this, Mr. Jorrocks had cut the left side of his chin in shaving, which he always considered ominous of sport.—Bump, bump, jolt, jolt, jog, jog, he went on his lumbering hunter, now craning over its neck to try if he could see its knees, now cheering and throwing bits of biscuit to the hounds, now looking back to see if Benjamin was in his right place, and again holloaing out some witticism to Fleeceall in

advance. Thus they reached the rushy, unenclosed common, partially studded with patches of straggling gorse, which bounds the east side of South Grove, and our sporting master having wet his forefinger on his tongue, and held it up to ascertain which quarter the little air there was came from, so as to give the pack the benefit of the wind, prepared for throwing off without delay. Having scrutinised the wood fence most attentively, he brought his horse to bear upon the rotten stakes and witherings of a low, ill made-up gap. In the distance Jorrocks thought of jumping it, but he changed his mind as he got nearer. 'Pull out this stake, Binjimin,' exclaimed he to the boy, suddenly reining up short; 'Jamp a top on 't! jamp a top on 't!' added he, 'so as to level the 'edge with the ground,' observing, 'these little places often give one werry nasty falls.' This feat being accomplished, Benjamin climbed on to Xerxes again, and Jorrocks desiring him to keep on the right of the cover, parallel with him, and not to be sparing of his voice, rode into the wood

after his hounds, who had broken away with a whimper, ripening into a challenge, the moment he turned his horse's head towards the cover.

What a cry there was! The boy with the fox in a bag had crossed the main ride about a minute before the hounds entered, and they took up the scent in an instant.—Mr. Jorrocks thought it was the morning drag, and screamed and holloaed most cheerily—'Talliho!' was heard almost instantaneously at the far end of the wood, and taking out his horn, Mr. Jorrocks scrambled through the underwood, breaking the briars and snapping the hazels, as he went. Sure enough the fox had gone that way, but the hounds were running flash in a contrary direction. 'Talliho! talliho! hoop! hoop! hoop! away! away! away!' holloaed Mat Maltby, who, after shaking the fox most scientifically, had pocketed the sack.

Twang, twang, twang, went Mr. Jorrocks's horn, sometimes in full, sometimes in divided notes and half screeches. The hounds turn and make for

the point. Governor, Adamant, Dexterous, and Judgment came first, then the body of the pack, followed by Benjamin at full gallop on Xerxes, with his face and hands all scratched and bleeding from the briars and brushwood, that Xerxes, bit in teeth, had borne him triumphantly through. *Bang,* the horse shot past Mr. Jorrocks, Benjamin screaming, yelling, and holding on by the mane, Xerxes doing with him just what he liked, and the hounds getting together and settling to the scent. 'My vig, wot a splitter!' cried Mr. Jorrocks in astonishment, as Xerxes took a high stone wall out of the cover in his stride, without disturbing the coping· but bringing Ben right on to his shoulder—'Hoff, for a fi' pun note! hoff for a guinea 'at to a Gossamer!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, eyeing his whipper-in's efforts to regain the saddle. —A friendly chuck of Xerxes' head assists his endeavours, and Ben scrambles back to his place. A gate on the left let Mr. Jorrocks out of cover, on to a good sound sward, which he prepared to take advantage of by getting Arterxerxes short

by the head, rising in his stirrups and hustling him along as hard as ever he could lay legs to the ground. An open gate at the top fed the flame of his eagerness, and, not being afraid of the pace so long as there was no leaping, Jorrocks sent him spluttering through a swede turnip field as if it was pasture. Now sitting plum in his saddle, he gathered his great whip together, and proceeded to rib-roast Arterxerxes in the most summary manner, calling him a great, lurching, rolling, lumbering beggar, vowing that if he didn't lay himself out and go as he ought, he'd 'boil him when he got 'ome.' So he jerked and jagged, and kicked and spurred, and hit and held, making indifferent progress compared to his exertions. The exciting cry of hounds sounded in front, and now passing on to a very heavy, roughly ploughed upland, our master saw the hind-quarters of some half-dozen horses, the riders of which had been in the secret, disappearing through the high quick fence at the top.

'Dash my vig, here's an unawoidable leap! I

(hup! I say you hugly beast!' roared
he, swing a tremendous jerk of the rein,
upon which the horse flew back, pull
Jor ks downwards in the muddy di

Page

do believe,' said he to himself, as he neared the headland, and saw no way out of the field but over the fence—a boundary one; 'and a werry hawkward place it is too,' added he, eyeing it intently, 'a yawnin' blind ditch, a hugly quick fence on the top, and maybe, a plough or 'arrow, turned teeth huppermost, on the far side.

'Oh, John Jorrocks, John Jorrocks, my good frind, I wishes you were well over with all my 'eart—terrible place, indeed! Give a guinea 'at to be on the far side,' so saying, he dismounted, and pulling the snaffle-rein of the bridle over his horse's head, he knotted the lash of his ponderous whip to it, and very quietly slid down the ditch and climbed up the fence, '*who-a-ing*' and crying to his horse to 'stand still,' expecting every minute to have him a-top of him. The taking-on place was wide, and two horses having gone over before, had done a little towards clearing the way, so having gained his equilibrium on the top, Mr. Jorrocks began jerking and coaxing Arterxerxes to induce him to follow, pulling at him much in

the style of a schoolboy who catches a log of wood in fishing.

'Come hup! my man,' cried Mr. Jorrocks coaxingly, jerking the rein; but Arterxerxes only stuck his great resolute fore legs in advance, and pulled the other way. '*Gently*, old fellow!' cried he, 'gently, Arterxerxes, my bouy!' dropping his hand, so as to give him a little more line, and then trying what effect a jerk would have, in inducing him to do what he wanted. Still the horse stood with his great legs before him. He appeared to have no notion of leaping. Jorrocks began to wax angry. 'Dash my vig, you hugly brute!' he exclaimed, grinning with rage at the thoughts of the run he was losing, 'Dash my vig, if you don't mind what you're arter, I'll get on your back, and bury my spurs in your sides. COME HUP! I say, YOU HUGLY BEAST!' roared he, giving a tremendous jerk of the rein, upon which the horse flew back, pulling Jorrocks downwards in the muddy ditch. Arterxerxes then threw up his heels and ran away, whip and all.

Meanwhile, our bagman played his part gallantly, running three-quarters of a ring, of three-quarters of a mile, chiefly in view, when, feeling exhausted, he threw himself into a furze-patch, near a farm-yard, where Dauntless very soon had him by the back, but the smell of the aniseed, with which he had been plentifully rubbed, disgusting the hound, he chucked him in the air and let him fall back in the bush. Xerxes, who had borne Ben gallantly before the body of the pack, came tearing along, like a poodle with a monkey on his back, when, losing the cry of hounds, the horse suddenly stopped short, and off flew Benjamin beside the fox, who, all wild with fear and rage, seized Ben by the nose, who ran about with the fox hanging to him, yelling, 'Murder! murder! murder!' for hard life.

And to crown the day's disasters, when at length our fat friend got his horse and his hounds, and his damaged Benjamin scraped together again, and re-entered Handley Cross, he was yelled at, and hooted, and rid coat! rid coat!—ed by the

children, and made an object of unmerited ridicule by the fair but rather unfeeling portion of the populace.

'Lauk! here's an old chap been to Spilsby!' shouted Betty Lucas, the mangle-woman, on getting a view of the great mud-stained back.

'*Hoot!* he's always tumblin' off, that ard chap,' responded Mrs. Hardbake, the itinerant lollypop-seller, who was now waddling along with her tray before her.

'Sich old fellers have ne business out a huntin'!' observed Miss Rampling, the dressmaker, as she stood staring bonnet-box on arm.

Then a marble-playing group of boys suspended operations to give Jorrocks three cheers; one, more forward than the rest, exclaiming, as he eyed Arterxerxes, 'A! what a shabby tail! A! what a shabby tail!'

Next as he passed the Barley-mow beer-shop, Mrs. Gallon, the landlady, who was nursing a child at the door, exclaimed across the street, to Blash, the barber's pretty but rather wordy wife—

'*A—a—a!* ar say, Fanny!—old Fatty's had a fall!'

To which Mrs. Blash replied with a scornful toss of her head, at our now admiring friend—

'*Hut!* he's always on his back, that old feller.'

'Not 'alf so often as you are, old gal!' retorted the now indignant Mr. Jorrocks, spurring on out of hearing.

CHAPTER III

A QUIET BYE

PIGG was all eager for the fray, and readily came into Stobbs's suggestion, that they should go out, and just take their chance of finding a fox, and of his going to ground or not as luck and his courage served.

'Ar 'll gan to'ard Duncan's, and get his grey for wor Ben,' said Pigg, 'gin ye 'll set the lad on to seddle the rest'; adding, 'the Squi-er ar 's warned 'ill ride Arterxerxes.

Off then Pigg went to Duncan Nevin's, and returned with a woebegone-looking horse in a halter, before Stobbs had made any progress in his department. Ben was not to be found. Neither at Mrs. Candy, the tart-woman's, nor at Mrs. Biffin's apple-stall, nor at Strap, the saddler's, nor

at any of his usual haunts, was anything to be heard of the boy.

The fact was, he had been unable to resist a ride at the back of a return chaise passing along Juniper Street, and being caught by his apron in the spikes, had been carried nearly to Copse Field before he got himself disentangled.

The oracle Gabriel having continued his monitions, Mr. Jorrocks thought to make the absence of the boy an excuse for not going, but now having both Stobbs and Pigg ranged against him, he was soon driven from the attempt. Pigg said 'Squi-er Stobbs wad de quite as weal as Ben,' and Jorrocks, little loth at heart perhaps, at length hoisted himself on to Arterxerxes with a swag that would have sent a light-carcassed horse over, letting the now smartly-clad Pigg ride the redoubtable Xerxes. So with Stobbs in front, Jorrocks with the hounds, and Pigg behind, they set off at a gentle trot, telling the inquirers that they were only going to exercise, a delusion that Mr. Jorrocks's hat seemed to favour.

Bump, bump,—jog, jog,—on they went; Mr. Jorrocks now chiding, now coaxing, now dropping an observation fore or aft, now looking at the sky, and now at his watch.

'Des say we shall find pretty soon,' observed Mr. Jorrocks; 'for they tells me the cover has not been disturbed this long time; and there's lots of lyin'—nice, and dry, and warm—foxes like damp beds as little as Christians. Uncommon pretty betch, that Barbara,—like Bravery as two peas,—by Billin'sgate out o' Benedict, I think. 'Opes we may get blood; it'll do them a deal o' good, and make them steady for the Beef and Carrots. Wen we gets the 'ounds all on the square, we'll 'ave the great Mr. Pomponius Hego to come and give us a good hoiling. Nothin' like soap.'

'Hooi! you chap with the turnip-cart!' now roared our master, to a cartman coming up; 'vot do you mean by stickin' your great ugly wehicle right afore my 'ounds!—Mr. Jorrocks's 'ounds, in fact! I'll skin ye alive!' added he, looking at the man, who stood staring with astonishment. And

Xerxes, who had borne Ben gallantly before the body of the pack, came tearing along, like a poodle with a monkey on his back, when, losing the cry of hounds, the horse suddenly stopped short, and off flew Benjamin beside the fox, who, all wild with fear and rage, seized Ben by the nose. *Page* 35

again they went bump, bump, jog, jog, at the pleasant post-boy pace, that has roused the bile of so many sportsmen, and set so many riders fighting with their horses.

At length they reached the cover side,—a long wood stretching up the sides of a gently sloping hill, and widening towards the summit. On the crown there stood a clump of Scotch firs and hollies, forming a landmark for many miles round. Turning from the high-road into the grass field on the right, the party pulled up to reconnoitre the ground, and make their final arrangements.

'Now,' said Mr. Jorrocks, standing erect in his stirrups, and pointing with his whip, which had the effect of making half the pack break towards the cover,—'Now,' said he, as soon as he had got them turned, 'this is a good big wood—two 'undred acres or more—and they tells me the foxes generally lie on the risin' ground, towards the clump. The vind's north-vest; so if we puts hin at this point, we shall draw up it, and p'rhaps get close to the warmint at startin', which is a

grand thing; but, howsomever, let's be doin'. Draw your girths, Pigg, or your 'oss 'll slip through his saddle. Now observe, there are three rides—one on each side, one hup the middle, *all* leadin' to the clump; and there are cross ones in all directions; so no man need be 'fraid o' losin' himself. Now let's put in. Pigg, open the wicket.'

'It's locked,' observed Pigg, running the hammer of his whip into the rails, throwing himself off his horse, and pulling a great clasp-knife out of his pocket as he spoke. 'Sink, but it aye gars mar knife laugh to see a lock put upon leather,' added he, as he drew the huge blade across the stiff band that secured the gate. Open flew the wicket—in went the pack with a dash, a crash, and a little music from the riotous ones, which gradually yielded to the 'Have a cares!' and '*Gently,* Wenus'; 'Gently, Lousey' (Louisa), with the cracks of the whips of Mr. Jorrocks and his huntsman.

'Now, Pigg, my frind, let's have a touch o' north country science,' observed Mr. Jorrocks,

bringing his horse alongside of his huntsman's. 'I'd like *well* to kill a fox to-day; I'd praise you werry much if we did.'

'*Aye, aye,*' said Pigg. 'Hoic in, Lousey! Solid puddin' 's better nor empty praise. Have at him there, Statesman, old boy,—ye look like a finder. Deil bon me, but ar thought ar winded him at the crossin' there,' added Pigg, pulling his horse short back to a cross ride he had just passed. 'Hoic in there, Priestess, ould gal,' said he, to an old black and white bitch, feathering round some gorse among the underwood; waving his hand as he spoke. 'That 's gospel, ar warrant ye,' continued he, watching her movements.

'What will 't tak for t' ard nag?' inquired Pigg, of a besom-maker, who now came down the ride with a wretched white Rosinante, laden with stolen brushwood.—'Have at him, there, Challenger!' speaking to a hound.

'Twenty shillin',' replied the man.

'Gie ye eight!' was the answer.—'Yooi, push him up!' to the hound.

'Tak twelve,' rejoined the tinker. 'Good horse—can get up of hisself, top puller and all!'

'Aye, but we dinna want him to poole: we want him to eat,' replied Pigg. '*Had still!*' exclaimed he, '*ar has him!*—TALLY HO!' roared Pigg, cramming his spurs into his horse, and dashing past Jorrocks like a shot. Out went both horns — twang — twang — twang sounded Pigg's; wow! wow! wow! went Jorrocks's in deeper and more substantial notes, and in a very short time the body of the pack were laid on the scent, and opened the concert with an overpowering burst of melody.

'Oh, beautiful! beautiful!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, in raptures, as each hound put his nose to the ground, and acknowledged the correctness of the scent. 'Oh, beautiful indeed!' added he, thumping the end of his horn upon his thigh, as though he were cutting large gun-waddings out of his breeches. ''Ow true to the line! best 'ounds in England, by far—never were such a pack! Shall have a rare Chevy—all alone to ourselves;

and when I gets home I'll write an account to *Bell's Life*, and the *Field*, which nobody *can* contradict. Hark forrard! hark forrard! hark forrard! away!' continued he, ramming the spurs into Arterxerxes' sides, to induce him to change his lumbering trot into a canter, which having accomplished, Mr. Jorrocks settled himself into a regular home seat in his saddle, and pounded up a grass ride through the centre of the wood in a perfect frenzy of delight, as the hounds worked their way a little to his right with a full and melodious cry.

'Hould hard, ye sackless ould sinner!' now cried Pigg, crossing the main ride at a canter, and nearly knocking Jorrocks off his horse, as he charged him in his stride. '*Had* (hold) *bye, ar say!*' he roared in his master's ear; 'or ar'll be dingin' on ye down—fox crossed reet in onder husse's tail, and thou sits glowerin' there and never see'd him.'

Out went both the horns again—twang!—twang! —twang; wow! wow! wow!

'Hark together! hark! get forrard, hounds, get forrard!' cried Mr. Jorrocks, cracking his ponderous whip at some lingerers that loitered on the ride, questioning the correctness of their comrades' cry. '*Get forrard,* I say!' repeated he, with redoubled energy. 'Confound your unbelievin' souls!' added he, as they went to cry. 'Now they are all on him again! Oh, beautiful, beautiful!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, in ecstasies. 'I'll lay five punds to a fiddler's farthin' they kill him. Mischief in their cry!—a rare scent—can wind him myself.' So saying, he gathered up his reins again, thrust his feet home in the stirrups, crammed the spurs into his horse, and rolled back on the ride he had just come up. 'Hark!' now cried our master, pulling up short and holding his hand in the air, as though he had a hundred and fifty horsemen at his tail to check in their career. 'Hark!' again he exclaimed; 'whoay, 'oss, whoay!' trying to get Arterxerxes to stand still and let him listen. 'Now, fool, vot are you champing the bit for?—whoay, I say! He's turned short again!

Hoick back! Hoick back! They've overrun the scent,' continued he, listening, as the chorus gradually died out; 'or,' added he, 'he *may* have got to ground.'

'*Tally ho!*' now screamed Jorrocks, as a magnificent fellow in a spotless suit of ruddy fur crossed the ride before him at a quiet, stealing, listening sort of pace, and gave a whisk of his well-tagged brush on entering the copse-wood across. '*Hoop! hoop! hoop! hoop!*' roared Mr. Jorrocks, putting his finger in his ear, and holloaing as loud as ever he could shout; and just as he got his horn fumbled past the guard, Dexterous, Affable, and Mercury dashed across the ride, lashing their sterns and bristling for blood, and Pigg appeared a little below cantering along with the rest of the pack at his horse's heels. '*Here, Pigg! there, Pigg!*' roared Mr. Jorrocks; 'just by the old hoak-stump.—*Gently* now! ah, ware 'eel—that's not the vay of him; he's hover to the left, I tells ye. That's him! Mercury has him. Hoick to Mercury, hoick! *get away, get away, get*

away, 'ounds! hoick together! hoick together! Oh, Pigg, wot a wopper he is!' observed Mr. Jorrocks, as Pigg joined him in the ride. 'The biggest fox whatever was seen—if we do but kill him—my vig! I'll eat his tongue for supper. Have it grilled "*cum grano salis*," with a *lee*-tle Cayenne pepper, as Pompeius Hego would say.'

'Aye,' replied Pigg, grinning with delight, his cap-peak in the air and the tobacco-juice streaming down his mouth like a Chinese mandarin. 'Ar'll be the *death of a shillin'* mysel'!' Saying which he hustled his horse and turned to his hounds.

Away they go again full cry across the cover to the utmost limits, and then back again to the far side. Now the fox takes a full swing round, but won't quit—now he cuts across—now Mr. Jorrocks views him, and swears he'll have his brains as well as his tongue for supper. Pigg has him next, and again comes Mr. Jorrocks's turn. 'Dash my vig, but he's a tough 'un!' observed Mr. Jorrocks to James Pigg, as they met again on

'I hope you'll brick your neck, ye nasty ugly ould thief!'. *Page* 54

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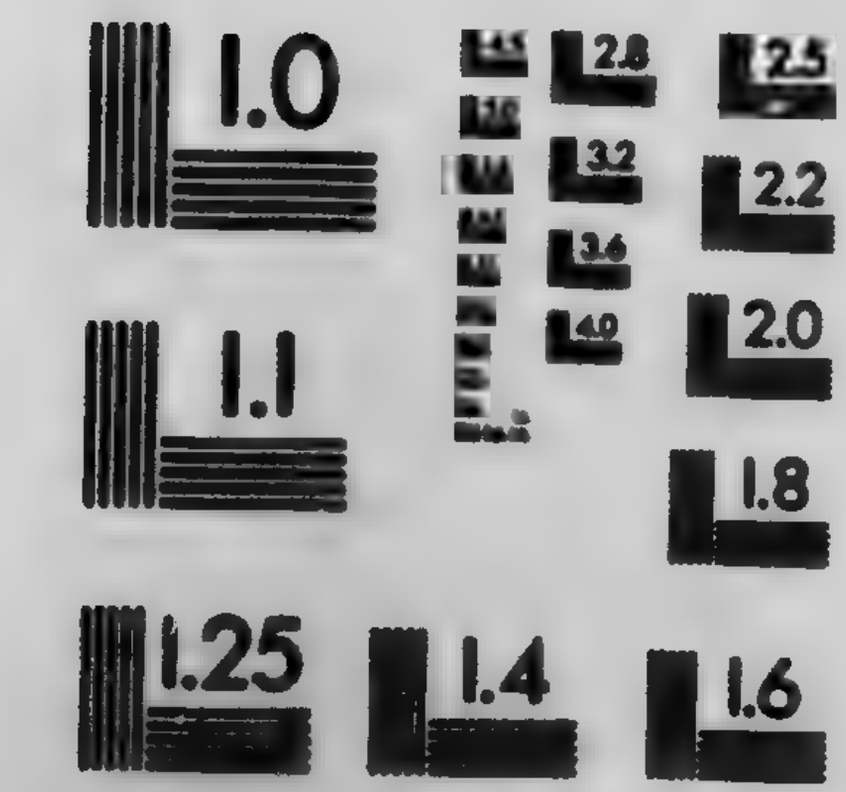

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the rising ground at the top of the ride, where Mr. Jorrocks had been fifteen times and Pigg seventeen, both their horses streaming with perspiration, and the blue and yellow worsted fronts of the bridles embossed with foam. 'Dash my vig, but it's a million and a half of petties,' continued Mr. Jorrocks, looking at his watch, and seeing it wanted but twenty minutes to four, 'that we adwertised, for there's a wast o' go left in him yet, and he'll take the shine out of some of our 'ounds before he is done with them—send them dragglin' 'ome with their sterns down—make 'em cry capevi, I'm thinking.'

'Niver fear!' exclaimed Pigg—'niver fear!—whativer ye de keep Tamboreen a rowlin'—yonder he gans! ar wish it mayn't be a fresh un. Arn't draggled a bit.'

'Oh, I 'opes not!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, the picture of despair. 'Would eat him, brush and all, sooner than that. Oh, dear! oh, dear! a fresh fox would be cruel—'ounds deserve him—worked him well.'

'Now they begin to *chass*!' exclaimed Pigg, listening to the ripening chorus. 'Aye, but there 's a grand scent!—Ar 'll be the death of a shillin' if we de but kill him. How way, ould man, how way,' continued Pigg cheeringly, jerking his arm to induce his master to follow. 'Whativer ye de, keep Tamboreen a rowlin'!' continued Pigg, spurring and jagging his horse into a canter.

On man and master go — now they meet Charley, and all three are together. Again they part company for different rides, each according to his fancy. There is an evident improvement in the scent, but whether from a fresh fox, or the hounds having got nearer the hunted one, is matter of doubt. Mr. Jorrocks is elated and excited beyond expression. The hounds are evidently working the fox, but the fear of a fresh one rather mars his enjoyment. The hounds turn short, and Pigg and Charles again join Mr. Jorrocks.

'A! man alive, but they are a dustin' his jacket!' exclaimed Pigg, pulling up to listen;—

'iv'ry hund's at him'; saying which he pulled out a large steel box and stuffed his mouth full of tobacco.

. . . . . .

A sudden pause ensues—all still as death—not a note—not even a whimper!

'*Who hoop!*' exclaims Mr. Jorrocks in ecstasies —'*Who hoop!* I say—heard the leadin' 'ound crack his back! Old Cruiser for a guinea!'

. . . . . .

'*Yonder they gan!*' cried Pigg, pointing to a hog-backed hill on the left, over which three couple of hounds were straining to gain the body of the pack—saying which he clapt spurs to his horse and dashed off at full gallop, followed by Charles.

. . . . . .

'Oh, dear! oh, dear!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, the picture of despair—'wot shall I do? wot shall I do?—gone away at this hour—strange country—nobody to pull the 'edges down for me or catch my 'oss if I gets spilt, and there's that Pigg ridin'

as if there was not never no such man as his master. Pretty kettle of fish!' continued Mr. Jorrocks, trotting on in the line they had taken. A bridle-gate let him out of cover, and from the first hill our master sees his hounds going like pigeons over the large grazing grounds of Beddington Bottoms, with Pigg and Stobbs a little in the rear, riding as hard as ever their horses can lay legs to the ground.

. . . . . .

''Ow that Scotch beggar rides!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, eyeing Pigg going as straight as an arrow, which exclamation brought him to his first fence at the bottom of the hill, over which both horsemen had passed without disturbing a twig.

''Old up, 'oss!' roared Mr. Jorrocks, seizing the reins and whip with one hand and the cantrel of the saddle with the other, as Arterxerxes floundered sideways through a low fence with a little runner on the far side. ''Old up!' repeated he, as they got scrambled through, looking back and saying, 'Terrible nasty place—wonders I ever

got over. Should ha' been drund to a certainty if I'd got in. Wouldn't ride at it again for nothin' under knighthood—Sir John Jorrocks, Knight!' continued he, shortening his hold of his horse. 'And my ladyship Jorrocks!' added he. 'She'd be bad to 'old—shouldn't wonder if she'd be for goin' to Halmack's. Dash my buttons, but I wish I was off this beastly fallow,' continued he; 'wonderful thing to me that the farmers can't see there'd be less trouble i' growin' grass than in makin' these nasty rutty fields. 'Eavens be praised, there's a gate—and a lane too,' saying which he was speedily in the latter, and gathering his horse together he set off at a brisk trot in the direction he last saw the hounds going.

Terribly deep it was, and great Arterxerxes made a noise like the drawing of corks as he blobbed along through the stiff, holding clay.

Thus Mr. Jorrocks proceeded for a mile or more, until he came upon a red-cloaked gipsy wench stealing sticks from a rotten fence on the left.

''Ave you seen my 'ounds, ould gal?' inquired he, pulling up short.

'Bless your beautiful countenance, my cock angel!' exclaimed the woman, in astonishment at the sight of a man in a scarlet coat with a face to match; 'bless your beautiful countenance, you're the very babe I've been looking for all this blessed day—cross my palm with a bit o' siller, and I'll tell you *sich* a fortin!'

'CUSS YOUR FORTIN!' roared Mr. Jorrocks, sticking spurs into his horse, and grinning with rage at the idea of having pulled up to listen to such nonsense.

'I hope you'll brick your neck, ye nasty ugly ould thief!' rejoined the gipsy, altering her tone.

''Opes I *sharn't*,' muttered Mr. Jorrocks, trotting on to get out of hearing. Away he went, blob, blob, blobbing through the deep holding clay as before.

Presently he pulled up again with a 'Pray, my good man, 'ave you seen my 'ounds—Mr. Jorrocks's

'ounds, in fact?' of a labourer scouring a fence-gutter. 'Don't you 'ear me, man?' bellowed he, as the countryman stood staring with his hand on his spade.

'I be dull of hearin', sir,' at length drawled the man, advancing very slowly towards our master with his hand up to his ear.

'Oh, dear! oh, dear!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, starting off again, 'was there ever sich a misfortinate indiwidual as John Jorrocks?'—'Ark! vot's that? Pigg's 'orn! Oh, dear, only a cow! Come hup, 'oss, I say, you hugly beast!—there surely never was sich a worthless beast lapped in leather as you,' giving Arterxerxes a good double thonging as he spoke. 'Oh, dear! oh, dear!' continued he, 'I wish I was well back at the Cross, with my 'ounds safe i' kennel.—Vot a go is this!—Dinner at five—baked haddocks, prime piece of fore chine, Portingal honions, and fried plum-puddin'; and now, by these darkenin' clouds, it must be near four, and here I be's, miles and miles away—'ounds still runnin', and adwertised for the

Beef and Carrots on Wednesday—never will be fit to go, nor to the Daisy nouther.'

'Pray, my good man,' inquired he of a drab-coated, big-basketed farmer, on a bay cart-horse, whom he suddenly encountered at the turn of the road, ''ave you seen anything of my 'ounds? Mr. Jorrocks's 'ounds, in fact?'

'Yes, sir,' replied the farmer, all alive; 'they were running past Langford plantations with the fox dead beat close afore them.'

''Ow long since, my frind?' inquired Mr. Jorrocks, brightening up.

'Oh, why just as long as it's taken me to come here—mebbe ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, not longer certainly. If you put on you may be in at the death yet.'

Away went spurs, elbows, and legs, elbows and legs, Arterxerxes was again impelled into a canter, and our worthy master pounded along, all eyes, ears, and fears. Night now drew on, the darkening clouds began to lower, bringing with them fog and a drizzling rain. 'Bad go this,' said Mr. Jorrocks,

'Speak, I say!—vot are you?—Come hup,
'oss, I say! Now for a murder!' Page 61

rubbing his hand down his coat-sleeve, and raising his face to ascertain the precise amount of the fall. 'Bad go, indeed. Got my Sunday 'at on, too. Hooi, bouys! did you see th' 'ounds?' inquired he of a troop of satchel-slung youths, plodding their ways homeward from school.

'*Y-e-a-s,*' at length drawled out one, after a good stare at the inquirer.

''Ow long since? come, *quick*, bouy!'

'May be twenty minutes; just as we com'd past Hookem-Snivey church we see'd fox, and hounds were close ahint—he was *varra* tired.'

'Twenty minutes,' repeated Mr. Jorrocks, aloud to himself; 'twenty minutes—may be a werry long way off by this; foxes travel fast. Vich way were they a-goin'?'

'Straight for Staunton-Snivey,' drawled the boy.

'My vig!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, 'vot a run; if we don't kill werry soon, it'll be pitch dark, and then there'll be a pretty kittle o' fish—th' 'ounds will kill all the ship (sheep) in the country—shall have a bill as long as my arm to pay.'

Fear lent fresh impetus to our worthy friend, and tightening his hold of Arterxerxes' head, who now began tripping and stumbling, and floundering along in a most slovenly manner, Mr. Jorrocks trotted on, and reaching Hookem-Snivey, saw by the foot-people standing on the churchyard-wall, that the hounds were 'forrard'; he turned down a lane to the left of the village stocks, in the direction the people were looking, and catching Staunton-Snivey in the distance, set off for it as hard as ever he could tear. A pretty clattering he made down the stony road.

Night now drew on apace, and heavy darkening clouds proclaimed a fast approaching storm. At Staunton-Snivey he learned that the hounds had just passed the turnpike on to the Downs, with the fox 'dead beat *close* afore them'; and still unwilling to give in, though every moment increased his difficulties, he groped open a bridle-gate, and entered upon the wide-extending Plain. The wind had now risen, and swept with uncommon keenness over the unprotected open. The drizz-

ling rain too became changed into larger, heavier drops, and thrusting his hat upon his brow, Mr. Jorrocks buttoned his coat up to the throat, and wrapping its laps over his thighs, tucked them in between his legs and the saddle. Dismal and disheartening were his thoughts, and many his misgivings for his rashness. 'Oh, dear! oh, dear!' muttered he, 'wot a most momentous crisis—lost! lost! lost!—completely lost! Dinner lost! 'ounds lost, self lost—all lost together! Oh, vot evil genius ever tempted me from the lovely retirement o' Great Coram Street? Oh! why did I neglect the frindly warnin' o' Gabriel Junks? Change, change—storm, storm—was in his every scream, and yet I would go. Cuss the rain, it's gettin' down my werry back, I do declare'; saying which he turned the blue collar of his coat up to his ears, and both laps flew out with a desperate gust of wind. 'Ord rot it,' said he, 'it's not never no use persewerin', may as well give in at once and 'ark back to Snivey; my Berlins are wet through, and I shall be drenched in another second.

'Who-ay, 'oss! who-ay; stand still, you hugly beast, and let me listen.' The ducking-headed brute at length obeyed.

'It *is* the 'orn,' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, after sitting listening for some time, with his hand to his ear; 'it *is* the 'orn, Pigg's not far off! There it goes again, but the 'owling wind carries so many ways, there's no saying whereabouts he is. I'll blow, and see if I can 'ail him.' Mr. Jorrocks then drew out his horn, and puffed and blew most lustily, but the raging tempest scattered the notes before they were well out of his mouth, and having exhausted his breath, he again paused, horn in hand, to listen. Between each blast of the raging hurricane, the faint notes of the horn were heard, some coming more fully as the gale blew more favourably, and a fuller one falling on his ear, during a period of partial lull, Mr. Jorrocks determined on advancing and endeavouring to rejoin his lost huntsman. 'Come hup, I say, you hugly beast!' exclaimed he, getting Arterxerxes short by the head, and digging the spurs freely into his sides.

The lumbering brute acknowledged the compliment with a sort of half hitch of a kick. 'Great henterpriseless brute—do believe you'd rayther 'ave a feed o' corn than the finest run wot ever was seen,' observed Mr. Jorrocks, cropping him. Night had now closed in, and even the sort of light of darkness that remains so long to the traveller who journeys onward with the closing day, deserted him, and earth and sky assumed the same sombre hue:—

'The dragon wing of night o'erspread the earth.'

Scarce a star was visible in the firmament, and the few scattered lights tha ppeared here and there about the country, seemed like snatches of hope lit up for the moment to allure and perplex the wanderer.

'If ever mortal man catches me in such a quandary as this again,' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, 'I 'opes—*oh, dear!* who's there?—Cus those Seidlitz pooders!—*Speak, I say!—vot are you?*—Come hup, 'oss, I say!' roared he, ramming the

spurs into Arterxerxes, who had suddenly shied off with a loud snort. 'Now for a murder!' ejaculated Jorrocks, still cramming in the spurs.

'*E-yah! E-yah! E-yah!*' went a donkey, greatly to the relief of Mr. Jorrocks's mind, who bad clenched his huge hammer-headed whip by the middle, so as to give an assailant the full benefit of its weight. Out then went his horn again, and the donkey brayed a full accompaniment.

'Oh, the deuce be with the hanimal!' cried Jorrocks, grinning with vexation, 'never saw a donkey yet that knew when to 'old his tongue. Oh, my vig, vot a vind! almost blows the 'orn itself; shall be blown to hatoms, I do believe. And the rain too! I really thinks I 'm wet to the werry waistband o' my breeches. I 'll lay a guinea 'at to a half-crown gossamer I haven't a dry thread upon me in 'alf a minute. Got a five-pund note i' my pocket that will be hutterly ruined. Sarves me right, for bein' such a hass as take these 'ounds—vy wasn't I content with the glorious old Surrey and an occasional turn with the Cut-'em-downs?

Well; I thinks this night will be the last of John Jorrocks! Best master of 'ounds wot ever was seen. 'Orrible termination to a hactive life; starved on a common—eat by wolves, or shepherds' dogs, which is much of a muchness as far as comfort's concerned. Why even yon donkey would be 'shamed of such an end. There goes the vind with my 'at—lucky it's tied on,' added he, trying to catch it as it dangled at his back, 'or I should never have seen it no more. I'd give fifty punds to be back at 'Andley Cross—I'd give a 'unaerd punds to be back at 'Andley Cross—knows no more where I am than if I was among the Bohea mountains—oh, dear, 'ow it pours! I'd give two 'underd punds to be back at 'Andley Cross—yonder's a light, I do declare—*two* on 'em—come hup, 'oss, I say. The nanimal seems to have no sense! I'll lead you, you nasty hugly brute, for I do believe you'll brick my neck, or my back, or both, arter all'; so saying, Mr. Jorrocks clambered down, and getting on to the sheltered side of the animal, proceeded to plunge and roll, and stagger

and stumble across the common, with the water churning in his great boots, in the direction of the distant lights.

After a good hour's roll about the open Downs, amid a most pelting, pitiless storm, our much-respected master at length neared the longed-for lights, which he had kept steadily in view, and found they proceeded from lamps at lodges on either side of handsome gates, betokening the entrance to a large demesne. Mounting his horse, he rode quickly through the gates, and trusting to the sound of Arterxerxes' hoofs for keeping the road, he jogged on in search of the mansion. Tall stately pines, rising like towers to heaven, with sombre yews in massive clumps, now made darkness visible, and presently a sudden turn of the road brought a large screen full of lights to view, some stationary, others gliding about, which acted like sunbeams on our master's mind; more grateful still was the shelter afforded by the lofty portals of the entrance, under which, as if by instinct, Arterxerxes bore his master, and

'A-a-a sink!—here's canny ard sweet-breeks hissel!' *Page* 68

then stood still to be delivered of his [illegible] 'The bell 'ill be somewhere here, I guess [illegible]erved Mr. Jorrocks, dismounting and running his hand up either side of the door-posts. 'Here's as much door as would serve Jack the Giant-killer's castle, and leave a little over.' So saying, having grasped the bulky handle of a wall-ensconced bell, he gave it a hearty pull, and paused as they say for an answer.

In an instant, two tall, highly-powdered footmen, in rich scarlet and white lace-bedaubed liveries, threw wide the folding-doors as though they expected Daniel Lambert, or the great Durham ox, exhibiting a groom of the chamber and a lusty porter, laying down the newspapers, and hurrying from a blazing fire in the back ground.

CHAPTER IV

THE 'CAT AND CUSTARD-POT' DAY

THE above day deserves a more extended notice than it receives in Mr. Jorrocks's Journal. He writes that 'somehow or other in shavin', he thought they'd 'ave mischief,' and he went into the garden as soon as he was dressed to consult the prophet Gabriel Junks, so that he might take his pocket Siphonia in case it was likely to be wet, but the bird was not there. Then just as he had breakfasted and was about ready for a start, young May, the grocer, sent him a horse to look at, and as 'another gen'l'man' was waiting for the next offer of him, Charley and Mr. Jorrocks stayed behind to try him, and after a hard deal, Mr. Jorrocks bought

him for £30 — which he makes a mem.: 'to call £50.'

Meanwhile Pigg and Ben trotted on with the hounds, and when they reached the meet — the sign of the Cat and Custard-Pot, on the Muswell-road, they found an immense assemblage, some of whom greeted Pigg with the familiar inquiry 'what he'd have to drink?'

'Brandy!' replied Pigg, 'brandy!' and tossing off the glass with great gusto, a second horseman volunteered one, then a third, then a fourth, then a fifth; for it is observable that there are people in the world will give away drink to any extent, who yet would be chary of offering either money or meat. Pigg, who as Mr. Jorrocks says in his Journal, is only a *lusus naturæ*, or loose 'un by natur', tosses off glass after glass, smacking his lips and slapping his thigh, getting noisier and noisier with each succeeding potation. Now he would sing them a song, now he would take the odds ag'in Marley Hill, then he would tell them about Deavilbogers' farm, and how, but for his

foreelder John, John Pigg, ye see, willin' his brass to the Formary ye see, he'd ha' been a gen'l'man that day and huntin' his own hunds. Then as another glass made its appearance, he would take off his cap and halloo out at the top of his voice, making the hounds stare with astonishment, '*Keep the tambourine a rowlin'!*' adding as he tossed it off, '*Brandy and baccy 'ill gar a man live for iver!*' And now when he was about at the noisiest, with his cap turned peak-backwards, and the tobacco juice simmering down the deeply-indented furrows of his chin, our master and Charley appear in the distance, jogging on, not too quickly for consequence, but sufficiently fast to show they are aware they are keeping the field waiting.

'Here he comes! here's Jorrocks! here's the old boy! here's Jackey at last!' runs through the meeting, and horsemen begin to arrange themselves for the reception.

'*A—a—a* sink!' exclaims Pigg, shaking his head, blinking and staring that way, 'here's canny

ard sweetbreeks hissel!' adding with a slap of his thigh as the roar of laughter the exclamation produced subsided, '*A—a—a*, but ar de like to see his feulish 'ard feace a grinnin' in onder his cap!'

'How way, canny man; how way!' now shouts Pigg, waving his hand as his master approached. 'How way! canny man, how way! and give us a wag o' thy neif,' Pigg extending his hand as he spoke.

Mr. Jorrocks drew up with great dignity, and placing his fist in his side, proceeded to reconnoitre the scene.

'*Humph!*' grunted he, 'wot's all this about?'

'Sink, but ar'll gi' thou a gob full o' baccy,' continued James, nothing daunted by his master's refusal of his hand. 'Sink, but ar'll gi' thou a gob full o' baccy,' repeated he, diving into his waistcoat pocket and producing a large steel tobacco box as he spoke.

Mr. Jorrocks signified his dissent by a chuck of the chin, and an ominous shake of the head.

'*A—a—a* man!' exclaimed Pigg, now changing his tone, 'but ar'll tell thee of a lass well worth her licks!'

'You deserve your *own*, sir, for gettin' so drunk,' observed Mr. Jorrocks haughtily.

Pigg.—'Ar's as sober as ye are, and a deal wizer!'

Jorrocks, angrily.—'I'll not condescend to compare notes with ye!'

Pigg, now flaring up.—'Sink! if anybody 'ill had mar huss, ar'll get off and fight him.'

Jorrocks, contemptuously.—'Better stick to the shop-board as long as you can.'

Pigg, furious.—'Gin ar warn't afeard o' boggin mar neif, ard gi' thou a good crack i' thy kite!'

Jorrocks, with emphasis.—'*Haw—da—cious* feller. I'll 'unt the 'ounds myself afore I'll put hup with sich himperence!'

Pigg, throwing out his arms and grinnin ecstasies.—'Ar'll be death of a guinea but arl coom and see thee!'

Jorrocks, looking indignantly round on the

now mirth-convulsed company.—'Who 's made my Pigg so drunk?'

Nobody answered.

'Didn't leave his sty so,' muttered our master, lowering himself jockey ways from his horse.

''Old my quad,' said he to Charley, handing him Arterxerxes, 'while I go in and see.'

Our master then stumped in, and presently encountering the great attraction of the place—the beautiful Miss D'Oiley—asked her, with a smiling countenance and a hand in a pocket, as if about to pay, 'Wot his 'untsman 'ad 'ad?'

'Oh, sir, it is all paid,' replied Miss D'Oiley, smiling as sweetly upon Jorrocks as she did on the generality of her father's customers, for she had no more heart than a punch-bowl.

'Is all paid?' muttered our friend.

'Yes, sir; each gentleman paid as he sent out the glass.'

'*Humph!*' twigged Mr. Jorrocks, adding, with a grunt, 'and that's wot these critters call sport!'

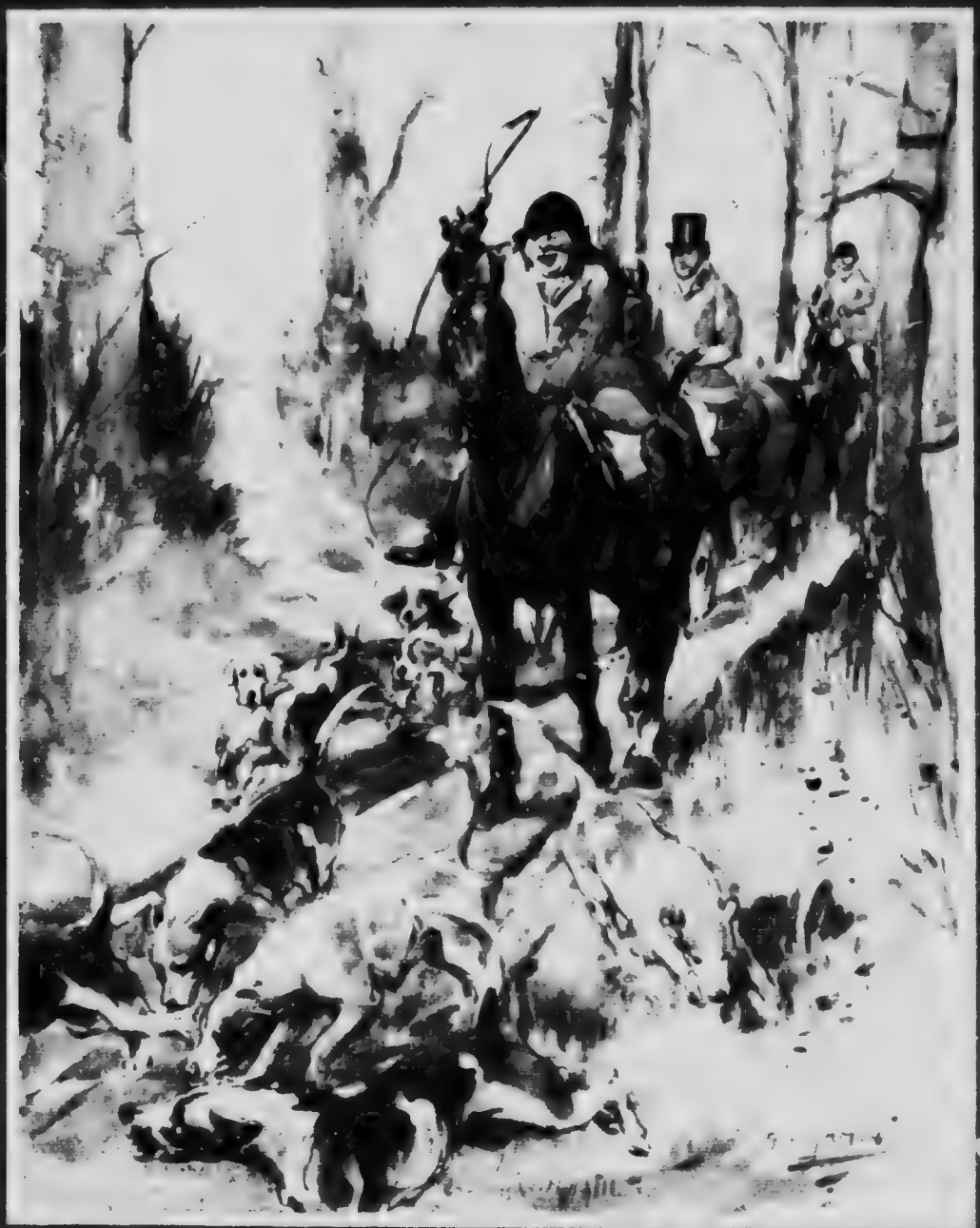
Our master then stumped out. 'Well, gen'l'-men,' exclaimed he, at the top of his voice off the horse-block, 'I 'opes you're satisfied wi' your day's sport!—you've made my nasty Pigg as drunk as David's sow, so now you may all go 'ome, for I shalln't throw off; and as to you,' continued our indignant master, addressing the now somewhat crestfallen Pigg, 'you go 'ome too, and take off my garments, and take yourself off to your native mountains, for I'll see ye at Jericho ayont Jordan afore you shall 'unt my 'ounds,' giving his thigh a hearty slap as he spoke.

'Wy, wy, sir,' replied Pigg, turning his quid; 'wy, wy, sir, ye ken best, only dinna ye try to hont them thysel'—*that's arle!*'

'There are as good fish i' the sea as ever came out on 't!' replied Mr. Jorrocks, brandishing his big whip furiously; adding, 'I'll see ye leadin' an old ooman's lap-dog 'bout in a string afore *you* shall 'unt 'em.'

'No ye won't!' responded Pigg. 'No ye won't! Arve ne carle te de nothin' o' the sort! Arve

'A fox! for a 'underd! A fox! for two-and-twenty 'undera! A fox! for a million! A fox! for 'alf the national debt!' Page 76



ne carle to de nothin' o' the sort!—Arle gan back to mar coosin Deavilbogers.'

'You may gan to the devil himself,' retorted Mr. Jorrocks vehemently—'you may gan to the devil himself—I'll see ye sellin' small coals from a donkey-cart out of a quart pot afore you shall stay wi' me.'

'Thou's a verra feulish, noisy, gobby, insufficient 'ard man!' retorted Pigg, 'and ar doesn't *regard thee!* No; AR DOESN'T REGARD THEE!' roared he, with a defiant flourish of his fist.

'You're a hignorant, hawdacious, rebellious rascal, and I'll see ye frightenin' rats from a barn wi' the bagpipes at a 'alfpenny a day, and findin' yoursel, afore I'll 'ave anything more to say to ye,' rejoined Mr. Jorrocks, gathering up his big whip as if for the fray.

'Sink, arle tak and welt thee like an ard shoe, if thou gives me ony mair o' thy gob!' rejoined the now furious Pigg, ejecting his baccy and motioning as if about to dismount.

Jorrocks, thinking he had done enough, then took his horse from Charley Stobbs, and hoisting himself on like a great crate of earthenware, whistled his hounds away from the still stupefied Pigg, who sat blinking and staring and shaking his head, thinking there were two Jorrockses on two Arterxerxes, two Bens, two Charley Stobbses, and something like five-and-forty couple of hounds.

The field remained behind praising Pigg and abusing Jorrocks, and declaring they would withdraw their subscriptions to the hounds if Pigg 'got the sack.' None of them would see Pigg want; and Harry Capper, more vehement than the rest, proposed an immediate subscription, a suggestion that had the effect of dispersing the field, who slunk off different ways as soon as ever the allusion to the pocket was made.

Jorrocks was desperately angry, for he had had an expensive 'stop,' and came bent on mischief. His confusion of mind made him mistake the road home, and go by Rumfiddler Green instead of Muswell Hill. He spurred, and cropped,

and jagged Arterxerxes — now vowing that he would send him to the tanners when he got 'ome—now that he would have him in the boiler afore night. He was very much out of sorts with himself and everybody else — even the hounds didn't please him — always getting in his way, hanging back looking for James Pigg, and Ben had fine fun cutting and flopping them forrard.

Charley, like a wise man, kept aloof.

In this unamiable mood our master progressed, until the horrible apparition of a great white turnpike-gate, staring out from the gable end of a brick toll-house, startled his vision and caused him to turn short up a wide green lane to the left. 'Take care o' the pence and the punds 'ill take care o' theirsels,' muttered our master to himself, now sensible that he had mistaken his road, and looking around for some landmark to steer by. Just as he was identifying White Choker Church in the distance, a sudden something shot through the body of the late loitering indifferent hounds, apparently influencing them

with a sort of invisible agency. Another instant, and a wild snatch or two right and left, ended in a whimper and a general shoot up the lane.

'*A fox!* for a 'underd!' muttered our master, drawing breath as he eyed them. '*A fox!* for two-and-twenty 'underd!' continued he, as Priestess feathered but spoke not.

'*A fox!* for a million!' roared he, as old Ravager threw his tongue lightly but confidentially, and Jorrocks cheered him to the echo.

'*A fox!* for 'alf the national debt!' roared he, looking round at Charley as he gathered himself together for a start.

Now as Jorrocks would say, Beckford would say, 'where are all your sorrows and your cares, ye gloomy souls! or where your pains and aches, ye complaining ones! one whimper has dispelled them all.'

Mr. Jorrocks takes off his cap and urges the tail-hounds on. A few more driving shoots and stops, producing increased velocity with each effort, and a few more quick snatchy whimpers,

end in an unanimous outburst of downrightly determined melody.

Jorrocks, cocking his cap on his ear, seats himself plump in his great saddle, and, gathering his reins, gallops after them in the full grin of delight. Away they tear up the rutty grassy ride, as if it was a railway. '*F-o-o-r-rard on! F-o-o-r-rard on!*' is his cry.

'*H-o-i-c cry! h-o-i-c cry! h-o-i-c!*' squeaks Ben, wishing himself at home at the mutton, and delighted at having got rid of James Pigg, who always would have the first cut.

It is a long lane that never has a turn, and this one was no exception to the rule, for in due course it came to an abrupt angle. A convenient meuse, however, inviting the fox onward, he abandoned the line and pursued his course over some bare, badly-fenced pastures, across which Mr. Jorrocks cheered and rode with all the confidence of a man who sees his way out. The pace mended as they went, and Jorrocks hugged himself with the idea of killing a fox without

Pigg. From the pastures they got upon Straggleford Moor, pretty much the same sort of ground as the fields, but the fox brushing as he went, there was a still further improvement of scent. Jorrocks then began to bet himself hats that he'd kill him, and went vowing what he would offer to Diana if he did. There was scarcely any promise too wild for him to make at this moment. The fox, however, was not disposed to accommodate Jorrocks with much more plain sailing for the purpose, and seeing, by the scarlet coats, that he was not pursued by his old friends the Dotfield harriers as at first he thought, and with whom he had had many a game at romps, he presently sunk the hill and made for the stiffly-fenced vale below.

'Blow me tight!' exclaimed Jorrocks, shortening his hold of Arterxerxes, and putting his head straight as he used to do down the Surrey hills, 'Blow me tight! but I wish he mayn't be gettin' me into grief. This looks to me werry like the Ingerleigh Wale, and if it is, it's a bit of as nasty ridin' grund as ever mortal man got into—

yawnin' ditches with himpracticable fences, posts with rails of the most formidable order, and that nasty long Tommy bruk, twistin' and twinin' about in all directions like a child's rattle-snake. 'Owever, thank goodness, 'ere's a gap and a gate beyond,' continued he, as his quick eye caught a gap at the corner of the stubble field he was now approaching, which getting through, he rose in his stirrups and cheered on the hounds in the line of the other convenience. '*For-r-a-r-d! For-r-a-r-d!*' shrieked he, pointing the now racing hounds out to Charley, who was a little behind; '*for-rard! for-rard!*' continued Jorrocks, rib-roasting Arterxerxes. The gate was locked, but Jackey —we beg his pardon—Mr. Jorrocks—was quickly off, and setting his great back against it, lifted it off the hinges. '*Go on!* never mind me!' cried he to Charley, who had pulled up as Jorrocks was dancing about with one foot in the stirrup, trying to remount.—'*Go on! never mind me!*' repeated he, with desperate energy, as he made another assault at the saddle. 'Get on, Ben, you

most useless appendage!' continued he, now lying across the saddle, like a miller's sack. A few flounders land him in the desired haven, and he trots on, playing at catch-stirrup with his right foot as he goes.

'*Forrard on! forrard on!*' still screamed he, cracking his ponderous whip, though the hounds were running away from him as it was, but he wanted to get Charley Stobbs to the front, as there was no one to break his fences for him but him.

The hounds, who had been running with a breast-high scent, get their noses to the ground as they come upon fallow, and a few kicks, jags, and objurgations on Jorrocks's part, soon bring Arterxerxes and him into the field in which they are. The scent begins to fail.

'*G—e-e-e-nt—ly* there!' cries Jorrocks, holding up his hand and reining in his horse, inwardly hoping the fox might be on instead of off to the right, where he sees his shiny friend, long Tommy, meandering smoothly along.

'*Yo dote!* Ravager, good dog, *yo dote*, Ravager!'

Ravager's unerring nose proclaims the varmint across the green headland.
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cheers Jorrocks, as the sage feathers and scuttles up the furrow. '*Yo-o dote!*' continued Mr. Jorrocks, cheering the rest on—adding as he looks at them scoring to cry, 'wot a petty it is we can't put new legs to old noses!' The spurt, however, is of short duration, for the ground gets worse as it rises higher, until the tenderest-nosed hound can hardly own the scent. A heavy cloud too oppresses the atmosphere. Jorrocks sees if he doesn't look sharp he'll very soon be run out of scent, so getting hold of his hounds, he makes a rapid speculation in his mind as to which way he would go if he were the fox, and having decided that point, he loses no time in getting the pack to the place.—Jorrocks is right!—Ravager's unerring nose proclaims the varmint across the green headland, and the next field being a clover ley, with a handy gate in, which indeed somewhat influenced Jorrocks in his cast, the hounds again settle to the scent, with Jorrocks rolling joyfully after them, declaring he'd be the best 'untsman under the sun if it warn't for the confounded lips. Away

he now crams, up the field road, with the hounds chirping merrily along on his right, through turnips, oat stubble, winter beans, and plough. A white farm onstead, Buckwheat Grange, with its barking cur in a barrel, causes the fox to change his course and slip down a broken but grassy bank to the left. 'Dash his impittance, but he 's taken us into a most unmanageable country,' observes Mr. Jorrocks, shading his eyes from the now out-bursting sun with his hand as he trotted on, eyeing the oft-occurring fences as he spoke. 'Lost all idee of where I ham, and where I 'm agoin',' continued he, looking about to see if he could recognise anything. Hills, dales, woods, water, were equally new to him.

Crash! now go the hounds upon an old dead thorn-fence, stuck on a low sod-bank, making Jorrocks shudder at the sound. Over goes Stobbs without doing anything for his followers.

'*Go on, Binjimin! go on!* Now,' cries Jorrocks, cantering up, cracking his whip, as if he wanted to take it in stride, but in reality to frighten Ben

over to break it. '*Go on!* ye miserable man-monkey of a boy!' repeats he, as Xerxes now turned tail, nearly upsetting our master—'Oh you epitome of a tailor!' groaned Jorrocks; 'you're of no more use wi' 'ounds than a lady's-maid,—do believe I could make as good a whipper-in out of a carrot! See! you've set my quad a refusin', and I'll bet a guinea 'at to a 'alf-crown wide-awake, he'll not face another fence to-day.—Come hup, I say, you hugly beast!' now roared Jorrocks, pretending to put Arterxerxes resolutely at it, but in reality holding him hard by the head,—'Get off, ye useless apology of a hosier and pull it down, or I'll give you sich a wopping as 'll send you to Blair Athol for the rest of the day,' exclaimed our half-distracted master, brandishing his flail of a whip as he spoke.

Ben gladly alighted, and by dint of pulling away the dead thorns, and scratching like a rabbit at the bank, he succeeded in greatly reducing the obstacle.

'Now lead him over!' cried Mr. Jorrocks,

applying his whip freely to Xerxes, and giving Ben a sly, accidental cut. Xerxes floundered over, nearly crushing Ben, and making plain sailing for Jorrocks. Our master then followed and galloped away, leaving Ben writhing and crying, and vowing that he would 'take and pull him off his 'oss.'

The hounds had now shot a few fields ahead, but a flashy catching scent diminishing their pace, Mr. Jorrocks was soon back to them yoicking and holding them on. '*Yooi, over he goes!*' cheered he, taking off his cap, as Priestess endorsed Ranger's promissory note on a very wet undrained fallow—'*Yooi, over he goes!*' repeated he, eyeing the fence into it, and calculating whether he could lead over or scuttle up to the white gate on the left in less time, and thinking the latter was safer, having got the hounds over, he rose in his stirrups, and pounded away while Charley took the fence in his stride. They were now upon sound old pasture, lying parallel with tortuous Tommy, and most musical were the

hounds' notes as each in turn prevailed.—Mr. Jorrocks had lit on his legs in the way of gates, and holloaed and rode as if he didn't know what craning was.

'Forrard on, Priestess, old betch!' cheered he, addressing himself to the now leading hound, 'forrard on!—for-rard!' adding, 'I'll gie ye *sich* a plate o' bones if we do but kill.'

On the hounds went bustling, chirping, and whimpering, all anxious to fly, but still not able to accomplish it. The scent was shifty and bad, sometimes serving them, and then as quickly failing, as if the fox had been coursed by a dog. Jorrocks, though desperately anxious to get them on better terms with their fox, trots gently on, anxiously eyeing them but restraining his ardour, by repeating the old couplet—

'As well as shape full well he knows,
To *kill* their fox they must 'ave nose.'

'Aye, aye, but full well he knows also,' continued our master, after he had repeated the lines three or four times over, 'that to kill their fox

they must press 'im, at some period or other o' the chase, which they don't seem at all inclined to do,' continued he, looking at their indifferent slack mode of proceeding. '*For-rard on!*' at length cries our master, cracking his whip at a group of dwellers, who seemed inclined to reassure every yard of the ground—'For-rard on!' repeated he, riding angrily at them, adding, 'cus your unbelievin' 'eads, can't you trust old Priestess and Ravager?'

To increase our worthy master's perplexities, a formidable flock of sheep now wheel semi-circularly over the line, completely obliterating any little scent that remained, and though our finest huntsman under the sun, aided by Charley as whip, quickly got the hounds beyond their foil, he was not successful in touching upon the line of the fox again.

'*Humph*,' grunted our master, reviewing his cast, 'the ship must ha' heat 'im, or he 's wanished into thin hair'; adding, 'jest put 'em on to me, Charley, whilst I makes one o' Mr. Craven Smith's

patent all-round-my-'at casts, for that beggar Binjimin's of no more use with a pack of 'ounds than a hopera-box would be to a cow, or a frilled shirt to a pig.' So saying, Mr. Jorrocks out with his tootler, and giving a shrill blast, seconded by Charley's whip, proceeded to go down wind, and up wind, and round about wind, without however feeling a touch of his fox. At length scarce a hound would stoop, and old black Lucifer gave unmistakable evidence of his opinion of matters by rolling himself just under Jorrocks's horse's nose, and uttering a long-drawn howl, as much as to say, 'Come, old boy! shut up! it's no use bothering: let's off to dinner!'

'Rot ye! ye great lumberin' henterpriseless brute!' roared Jorrocks, cutting indignantly at him with his whip, 'rot ye! d'ye think I boards and lodges and pays tax 'pon you to 'ave ye settin' up your 'olesale himperance that way?—*g-e-e-t-e* away, ye disgraceful sleepin' partner o' the chase!' continued he, as the frightened hound scuttled away with his tail between his legs.

'Well, it's nine 'underd and fifty thousand petties,' muttered our master now that the last of the stoopers had got up their heads, 'it's nine 'underd and fifty thousand petties that I hadn't got close away at his brush, for I'd ha' killed 'im to a dead certainty. Never was a fox better 'unted than that! Science, patience, judgment, skill, everything that constitutes an 'untsman—Goodhall, himself, couldn't ha' done it better! But it's not for mortals to command success,' sighed our now greatly dejected master.

Just as Mr. Jorrocks was rein[illegible]n his horse to blow his hounds together, a wild, shrill, view holloo, just such a one as a screech-owl gives on a clear frosty night, sounded through the country, drawing all eyes to Camperdown Hill, where, against the blue sky, sat a Wellington-statue-like equestrian with his cap in the air, waving and shouting for hard life.

The late lethargic hounds pricked their ears, and before Mr. Jorrocks could ejaculate the word

'Now lead him over!' cried Mr. Jorrocks, applying his whip freely to Xerxes, and giving Ben a sly, accidental cut. *Page* 83

'Pigg!' the now excited pack had broke away, and were streaming full cry across country to where Pigg was perched.

'*Get away hooic! Get away hooic!*' holloaed our master, deluding himself with the idea that he was giving them leave. '*Get away h-o-o-ick! Get away h-o-o-ick!*' repeated he, cracking his ponderous whip.

The hollooing still continued—louder if possible than before.

'Blow me tight!' observed Mr. Jorrocks to himself, 'wot a pipe the feller 'as! a'most as good as Gabriel Junks's!' and returning his horn to his saddle, he took a quick glance at the country for a line to the point, instead of crashing after Charley Stobbs, who seemed, by the undue elevation of his horse's tail on the far side of a fence, to be getting into grief already. 'There 'ill be a way out by those stacks,' said Mr. Jorrocks to himself, eyeing a military-looking line of burly corn stacks drawn up on the high side of a field to the left: so saying he caught Arterxerxes short

round by the head, and letting in the Latchfords, tore away in a desperate state of flutter and excitement, the keys and coppers in his pockets contributing to the commotion.

Mr. J. was right, for convenient gaps converged to these stacks, from whence a view of the farm-house (Barley Hall) further on was obtained. Away he next tore for it, dashing through the fold-yards, leaving the gates open as if they were his own, and catching Ben draining a pot of porter at the back-door. Here our fat friend had the misfortune to consult farmer Shortstubble, instead of trusting to his own natural instinct for gaps and gates, and Shortstubble put him on a line as wide of his own wheat as he could, which was anything but as direct a road as friend Jorrocks could have found for himself. However, Camperdown Hill was a good prominent feature in the country, and by dint of brisk riding, Jorrocks reached it in a much shorter time than the uninitiated would suppose he could. Now getting Arterxerxes by the mane, he rose in his

stirrups, hugging and cramming him up the rugged ride to the top.

When he reached the summit, Pigg, whose sight was much improved, had hunted his fox with a very indifferent scent round the base of the hill, and having just got a view, was capping the hounds on as hard as ever his horse could lay legs to the ground, whooping and forcing the fox away into the open.

'Wot a man it is to ride!' ejaculated Jorrocks, eyeing Pigg putting one of Duncan Nevin's nags that had never seen hounds before at a post and rail that almost made him rise perpendicularly to clear. 'Well done you!' continued Mr. Jorrocks, as with a flounder and scramble James got his horse on his legs on the far side, and proceeded to scuttle away again as hard as before. 'Do believe he's got a view o' the varmint,' continued Mr. Jorrocks, eyeing Pigg's cap-in-hand progress.

'Wot a chap it would be if it could only keep itself sober!' continued Mr. Jorrocks, still eyeing James intently, and wishing he hadn't been too

hard upon him. 'Of all 'bominable vices under the sun that of hintemperance is the most degradin' and disgustin',' continued our master emphatically, accompanying the assertion with a hearty crack of the whip down his leg.

Jorrocks now gets a view of the varmint stealing away over a stubble, and though he went stouter than our master would have liked if he had been hunting himself, he saw by Pigg's determined way that he was master of him, and had no doubt that he would have him in hand before long. Accordingly, our master got Arterxerxes by his great Roman-nosed head, and again letting the Latchfords freely into his sides, sent him scrambling down hill at a pace that was perfectly appalling. Open went the gate at the bottom of the hill, down Jorrocks made for the Long Tommy ford, splash he sent Arterxerxes in just like Johnny Gilpin in Edmonton Wash—

'throwing the water about,
On both sides of the way,
Just like a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.'

Then having got through, he seized the horse by the mane, and rose the opposing bank, determined to be in at the death if he could. 'Blow me tight!' ejaculated he, 'do believe this hungry highlander will grab him arter all!' And then rising in his stirrups and setting up his great shoulders, Jorrocks tore up the broken Mugger-camp lane, sending the loose stones flying right and left as he went.

'If they can but pash him past Ravenswing-scar,' observed Mr. Jorrocks, eyeing the leading hounds approaching it, 'they'll mop 'im to a certainty, for there's nothin' to save 'im arter it. Crikey! *they're past!* and its U.P. with old Pug! Well, if this doesn't bang Bannager I doesn't know what does! If we do but kill 'un, I'll make sich a hofferin' to Bacchus as 'ill perfectly 'stonish 'im,' continued Mr. Jorrocks, setting Arterxerxes agoing again. '*Gur-r-r along!* you great 'airy 'eeled 'umbug!' groaned he, cropping and rib-roasting the horse with his whip.

Arterxerxes, whose pedigree, perhaps, hasn't been very minutely looked into, soon begins to give unmistakable evidence of satiety. He doesn't seem to care much about the whip, and no longer springs to the spur. He begins to play the castanets too in a way that is anything but musical to Mr. Jorrocks's ear. Our master feels that it will very soon be all U.P. with Arterxerxes too.

'Come hup, you snivellin', drivellin' son of a lucifer match-maker!' he bears out to Ben, who is coming lagging along in his usual slouch. 'Come on!' roared he, waving his arm frantically, as, on reaching the top of Ravenswing-scar he sees the hounds swinging down, like a bundle of clock pendulums, into the valley below. 'Come hup, I say ye miserable, road-ridin', dish-lickin' cub! and give me that lead for you're a disgrace to a saddle, and only fit to eat muffins for a young ladies' boardin'-school. Come hup, you preter-pluperfect case of mumps!' adding, 'I wouldn't give ten pence a dozen for such beggarly

boys; no, not if they'd give me a paper bag to put 'em in.'

Mr. Jorrocks, having established a comfortable landing-place on a grassy mound proceeded to dismount from the nearly pumped-out Xerxes, and pile himself on to the much fresher Xerxes, who had been ridden more as a second horse than as a whipper-in's.

'*Now go along!*' cried our master, settling himself into his saddle, and giving Xerxes a hearty salute on the neck with his whip. '*Now go along!*' repeated he, 'and lay yourself out as if you were in the cut-me-downs,' adding, 'there are twenty couple of 'ounds on the scent!'

'By 'eavens, it's sublime!' exclaimed he, viewing the hounds, streaming away over a hundred acre pasture below. 'By 'eavens, it's sublime! 'ow they go, screechin' and towlin' along like a pocket full o' marbles. 'Ow the old woods re-echoes their melody, and the old castle seemingly takes pleasure to repeat the sound. A

Jullien concert's nothin' to it. No, not all the bands i' the country put together.'

'How I wish I was a heagle!' now exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, eyeing the wide stretching vale before him. 'How I wish I was a heagle, 'overin' over 'em, seein' which 'ound has the scent, which hasn't, and which are runnin' frantic for blood.

'To guide a scent well over a country for a length of time, through all the changes and chances o' the chase, and among all difficulties usually encountered, requires the best and most experienced abilities,' added he, shortening his hold of his horse, as he now put his head down the steep part of the hill. Away Jorrocks went wobbling like a great shape of red Noyeau jelly.

An accommodating lane serves our master below, and taking the grassy side of it, he pounds along manfully, sometimes hearing the hounds, sometimes seeing Pigg's cap, sometimes Charley's hat, bobbing over the fences; and, at more favoured periods, getting a view of the whole panorama of the chase. Our master is in

'Wot a man it is to ride!' ejaculated Jorrocks, eyeing Pigg putting one of Duncan Nevin's nags that had never seen hounds before at a post and rail that almost made him rise perpendicularly to clear. *Page* 91

ecstasies! He whoops, and shouts, and grins, and rolls in his saddle, looking more like the drunken Huzzar at the circus, than the sober, well-conducted citizen.

'*F-o-r-rard on!*' is still his cry. Hark! They've turned and are coming towards him. Jorrocks hears them, and spurs on in hopes of a nick. Fortune favours him, as she generally does the brave and persevering, and a favourable fall of the land enables our friend to view the fox still travelling on at an even, stealthy sort of pace, though certainly slower than the still pressing, squeak, squeak, yap, yap, running pack. Pigg and Charley are in close attendance, and Jorrocks nerves himself for a grand effort to join them.

'*I'll do it,*' says he, putting Xerxes at a well broken-down cattle-gap, into Wandermoor Common. This move lands him well inside the hounds, and getting upon turf he hugs his horse, resolved to ride at whatever comes in his way. Another gap, not quite so well flattened as the first, helps our friend on in his project, and

emboldened by success, he rams manfully at a low stake and rice-bound gateway, and lands handsomely in the next field. He thus gains confidence.

'Come on, ye miserable, useless son of a lily-livered besom-maker,' he roars to Benjamin, who is craning and funking at the place his master has come so gallantly over. 'Rot ye,' adds Jorrocks, as the horse turns tail, 'I'll bind ye 'prentice to a salmon pickler.'

The next field is a fallow, but Jorrocks chooses a wet furrow, up which he spurts briskly, eyeing the country far and near, as well for the fox, as a way out. He sees both. The fox is skirting the brow of the opposite heathery hill, startling the tinkling belled sheep, while the friendly shepherd waves his cap, indicating an exit.

'Thank 'ee,' cries Jorrocks, as he slips through the gate.

There is nothing now between him and the hounds, save a somewhat rough piece of moor-land, but our master not being afraid of the pace

so long as there is no leaping, sails away in the full glow of enthusiastic excitement. He is half frantic with joy!

The hounds now break from scent to view and chase the still flying fox along the hill-side—Duster, Vanquisher, and Hurricane have pitched their pipes up at the very top of their gamut, and the rest come shrieking and screaming as loudly as their nearly pumped-out wind will allow.

Dauntless is upon him, and now a snap, a turn, a roll, and it's all over with reynard.

Now Pigg is off his horse and in the midst of the pack, now he's down, now he's up, and there's a pretty scramble going on!

'*Leave him! leave him!*' cries Charley, cracking his whip in aid of Pigg's efforts. A ring is quickly cleared, the extremities are whipped off, and behold the fox is ready for eating.

'O Pigg, you're a brick! a fire brick!' gasps the heavily perspiring Mr. Jorrocks, throwing himself exhausted from his horse, which he leaves outside the now riotous ring, and making up to

the object of his adoration, he exclaimed, 'O Pigg, *let us fraternise!*' Whereupon Jorrocks seized Pigg by the middle, and hugged him like a Polar bear, to the mutual astonishment of Pigg and the pack.

'*A—a—a* wuns man, let's hev' him worried!' roared Pigg, still holding up the fox with both hands high above his head. '*A—a—a* wuns man, let's hev' him worried,' repeated James, as Jorrocks danced him about still harder than before.

'*Tear 'im and eat 'im!*' roars Pigg, discharging himself of the fox, which has the effect of detaching Jorrocks, and sending him to help at the worry. Then the old boy takes a haunch, and tantalises first Brilliant, then Harmony, then Splendour, then Vengeance, all the eager young entry in short.

Great was Mr. Jorrocks's joy and exultation. He stuck his cap on his whip and danced about on one leg. He forgot all about the Cat and Custard-Pot, the gob full of baccy, and crack in

the kite, in his anxiety to make the most of the victory. Having adorned the headstall of his own bridle with the brush, slung the head becomingly at Pigg's saddle side, and smeared Ben's face plentifully with blood, he got his cavalcade in marching order, and by dint of brisk trotting re-entered Handley Cross just at high change, when everybody was abusing him for his conduct to poor Pigg, and vowing that he didn't deserve so good a huntsman. Then when they saw what had happened, they changed their tunes, declaring it was a regular preconcerted do, abused both James and Jorrocks, and said they'd withdraw their subscriptions from the hounds.

CHAPTER V

PINCH-ME-NEAR FOREST

AS if Mr. Jorrocks's hunting appetite grew by what it fed upon, he passed a very restless, feverish night, dreaming of all sorts of hunting casualties, and greatly disturbing Mrs. Jorrocks's repose by his evolutions. At length, thinking he was throwing down a stone wall, to pick up his fox, he set his feet against her with such force as sent her flying out of bed, and so finished the performance. Mrs. J. went off to Belinda's room, and our master got up, though it was only five o'clock. Early as he was, however, Pigg, who had not gone to bed at all, was before him, and when Mr. Jorrocks got downstairs, he found him at a sumptuous breakfast with Batsey in the back kitchen. Setting

Pigg off to the stable, Mr. Jorrocks took his place at the table, and rated Batsey soundly for encouraging a man of Pigg's 'unsteady 'abits.'

Batsey justified herself on the score of promoting her master's sport. 'Pigg,' she was 'sure was nothin' to her.' *She* didn't want to be Mrs. Pigg. Not she, indeed! She could do better than that any day, she 'oped! '*Pigg, forsooth!*' and she bounced about, and banged the butter upon the muffins and toast, as if her feelings were outraged in the extreme. How the dispute might have ended is doubtful, for in the midst of it Batsey gave Mr. Jorrocks a kidney so hot off the fire, that he burnt his mouth, and as he danced about the kitchen floor, unable to retain it, yet unwilling to give it up, she took advantage of the opportunity and slipped quietly away, to have a cry in her own room. Our master then finished his breakfast with a blistered mouth, as best he could, and then followed Pigg to the stable.

It was so dark when Pigg gave Mr. Jorrocks

his horse, that our master was obliged to feel along his back to his tail, to be sure that he hadn't got hold of Xerxes instead of Arterxerxes; for though if our friend had been selling him, he would have sworn that Xerxes was far the best of the two—finest 'oss wot ever was seen, in fact—yet an inconvenient jerk he had with his hind-quarters in his jumps, more than counterbalanced any little additional speed he had over Arterxerxes. It took Mr. Jorrocks more time to get shuffled back into his saddle after a leap on Xerxes, than Arterxerxes would have lost by his steady laborious plodding, to say nothing of the inconvenience of riding on a horse's neck, instead of on his back. But to our story. Pigg, like a prudent man, had coupled the strange hounds with some of their own, or they would have been all over the town in no time. Master and man spurred briskly on, Jorrocks acting whipper-in, and Pigg yoicking and coaxing the hounds to him as best he could. They cleared the town, and got to the Whickenby Gate before

'Yon's it!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks after a careful survey of the now developed scene. 'Yon's it!' repeated he, pointing with his ponderous whip towards a dark mass in the distance. Page 106

the 'pike-man was up; and violent was the clattering, and dread the denunciations that Jorrocks hurled at his white cotton night-capped head, when at length he popped it out to inquire the cause of the row.

Our friends didn't get much use of the hard road for their money, for Pinch-me-near Forest being quite a back-slum sort of place, that nobody ever wanted to see, the roads all seemed to shun it, and it was only by very vague conjectures and speculative cuts that our friends managed to steer towards it at all. Not that the forest itself was worse than any of its Royal brethren; indeed, it was better than some, for Prettyfat neither stole the wood himself, nor knowingly suffered others to steal it, his being the easy do-nothing style of management, that let the trees grow if they liked, or if they didn't like, let them stand still and die, or be blown down and rot at their leisure. He made his reports regularly and fairly, and so long as he got as much money as paid his own salary and the wages of his labourers,

he felt he fulfilled all the duties of a faithful servant of the Crown, and did all that a grateful nation could require.

A very rubicund sun at length began to struggle through the dull leaden clouds, gradually revealing hill and dale, fields, fences, and enclosures, the whole paraphernalia of a landscape, just like a child's puzzle-map getting put together.

'Yon's it!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks after a careful survey of the now developed scene. 'Yon's it!' repeated he, pointing with his ponderous whip towards a dark mass in the distance.

'Ar's warn'd ye, is't,' replied Pigg, replenishing his mouth with tobacco. 'Ar's warn'd ye is't. It's a gay bit off though.'

'*Trot on!*' retorted Mr. Jorrocks anxiously, spurring Arterxerxes vehemently, an insult that the animal resented by a duck of his head and a hoist of his heels.

Bump, bump, trot, trot, squash, splash, swosh, they went through the open fields, over the

commons and heaths of a wet, sterile, Pewitey country, which gradually got worse as they neared the stunted brushwood of the straggling forest. At length they came upon a nest of forest squatters, with their wretched mud cabins and rolling fences, by whom they were directed to a smart, well-hung green gate, with a cattle-gap on either side, as the commencement of Mr. Prettyfat's inattentions. Some well-used horse trods, converging towards a gently rising hill on the right, from whence a curl of clear smoke was now rising, favoured the supposition that the representative of Royalty was not far off. Though the morning was in its pride yet when our friends got to the front of the neat rose-entwined house—the windows were as white as the rough cast walls—there were no signs of animation of any sort. 'The beggar's not hup yet, I do believe,' observed Mr. Jorrocks, spurring the great splaw-footed Arterxerxes right on to the trimly shaven grass-plot in the centre of the carriage ring. Rising in his stirrups, and

clearing his throat with a prolonged *y-e-a-u-u-p!* as he prepared his big whip for execution, he gave such a cannonade of a crack, as sounded through the house and reverberated in the forest.

'Sink, but that's a good 'un!' grinned Pigg, listening to the oft-repeated echoes.

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, before, bang, went a lattice-window up above, and a rival of the red-faced sun appeared beneath the night-capped head of the Deputy-surveyor.

'What are you doin' here?' roared a stentorian voice.

'Rum, ar say! rum!' exclaimed Pigg, thinking he was asking what he would have to drink.

'Doin' 'ere!' replied Mr. Jorrocks, whose ears had served him better. 'Doin' 'ere! vy I be come to 'unt the foxes to be sure!'

'Hunt the foxes,' retorted Prettyfat indignantly. 'Is *this* a time to come and hunt foxes—none but chimney-sweeps would disturb one at this hour.'

'Sink, gin ye'll had mar hus ar'll get off

and fight 'im!' exclaimed Pigg, furious at the comparison.

'*Hush!*' said Mr. Jorrocks, 'let me talk to 'im.'

'Vy, didn't I tell ye I'd come hearly?' asked our master, rising in his stirrups and speaking in a conciliatory tone.

'Come early,' repeated Prettyfat, recollecting the wide-margined official, 'come early, yes, but you don't call tramplin' on a gen'l'man's grass-plot comin' early, do ye? You don't 'spect to find a fox there.'

'Hoot, thou 'ard feuil, what's thou grumblin' 'bout thy grass-plat for?' demanded Pigg, in a tone of derision.

'Treasonous, traitrous rogues,' exclaimed Prettyfat. 'I'll hand you over to the law officers of the Crown.

'Let's off!' ejaculated Jorrocks, catching Arterxerxes short round by the head—'Let's off'!—I've no relish for law, still less for hornamentin' the top of Temple Bar with my 'ead'; so saying our master spurred through the pack,

and treading on a couple of hounds, raised such a clamour as drowned the further observations of the Sylvan Viceroy. Down they dived into the wood again. They had not got very far before they met Prettyfat's perspiring drab-turned-up-with-grease flunkey, panting along with a pitch-fork in his hand, who exclaimed, on seeing them —'Oh gen'l'men! gen'l'men! you should ha' been here a bit sooner (puff), that tarnation fox has been at the (puff), poultry again.'

'You don't say so!' grinned Mr. Jorrocks, pulling short up and standing erect in his stirrups. 'You don't say so! Show us the way on 'im and I'll sarve 'im out. Off with the couples, Pigg,' added he, turning to James, who was already on the ground disengaging the draft. Away they tear in all directions, howling and towling like mad. A shrill blast of the horn gets them into a smaller compass, and Mr. Jorrocks trots on preceded by the man, to show him where he last saw the fox. Old Ravager first drops his stern, feathers, but speaks not, when one of the

new noisy ones immediately gives tongue, and the sage taking a fling in advance, gave something between a squeak and a note, which being immediately endorsed by the rest, they drive with an echoing crash into the thick of the forest. Now our friend's misfortunes commence, for the further they get from the seat of government, the worse the riding becomes. Impervious thickets, through which hounds meuse, but horses can make no way, soon separate them from the pack, whose music falls fainter on the ear; our anxious master pushes on, through the wet sterile sand, or slobby quagmires, impeded ever and anon by a fallen tree—in hopes that a favourable turn may again land him with the pack—'Dash my vig,' says he, shortening his hold of Arterxerxes, who all but falls over a fern-concealed log—'Dash my vig, I wish I mayn't brick my neck in this terrible desert—most outlandish place I ever was in.'

'It *is* a rum place,' observed Pigg, doing the like.

''Ark! where are they?' asked Mr. Jorrocks, pulling short up, with his hand to his ear.

'They seem arle oour,' replied Pigg; 'wish these Quorn dogs may be quite what they oout.'

'It's the confounded hecho,' observed Mr. Jorrocks, still listening attentively.

'Ar tell ye, they've divided,' asserted Pigg.

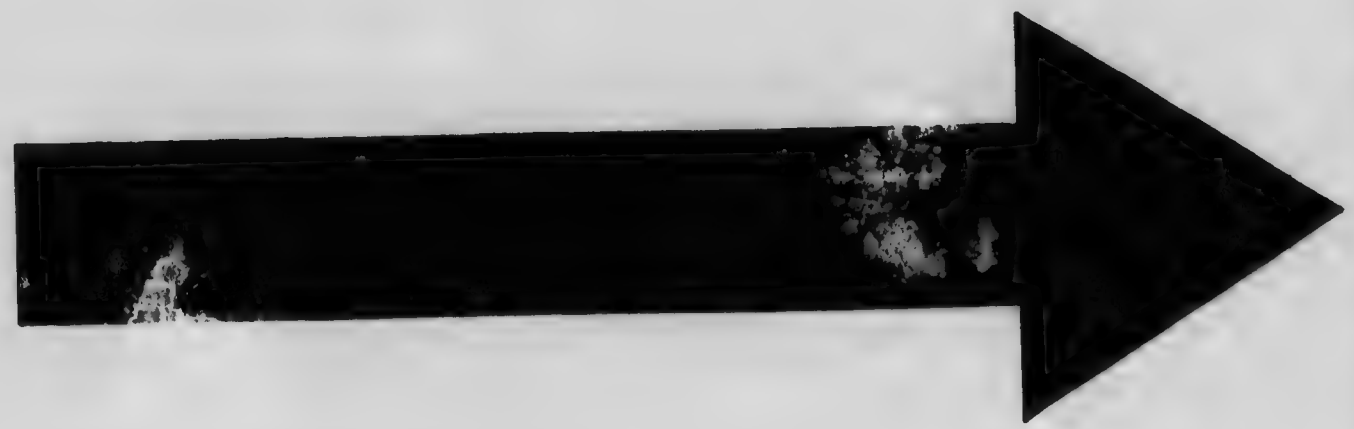
'Then turn them,' rejoined Mr. Jorrocks.

'Torn them thysel',' retorted Pigg, dropping his elbows and starting off at a canter.

'Now where's the man goin' to!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, eyeing his fast-receding huntsman diving into the thicket—'Wot's he a leavin' me 'ere for?' continued he, feeling the desolation of his position. 'Wish I may ever find my way out,' continued he, looking around on the grey unhealthy scene of stunted desolation.

Thinking to stick to Pigg, at all events, our master set Arterxerxes agoing again, and blobbed on in his deep, black imprints. Sorry work it was for old Arterxerxes, who was no great hand at going through deep. Jorrocks spurred him, and jagged him, and cropped him, and called him all the great lumberin', henterprizeless beggars he

'What are you doin' here?' roared a stentorian voice. *Page* 108



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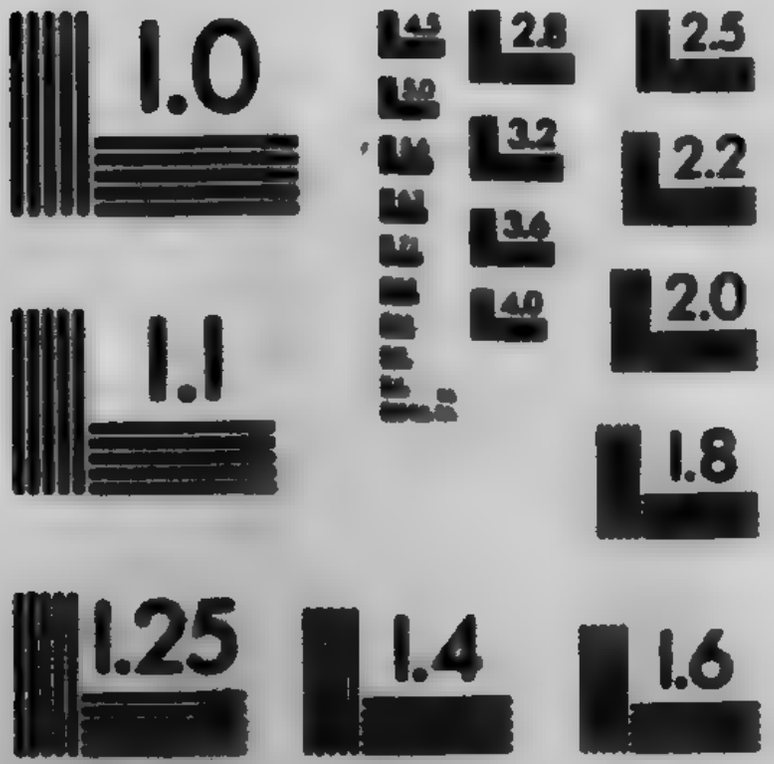

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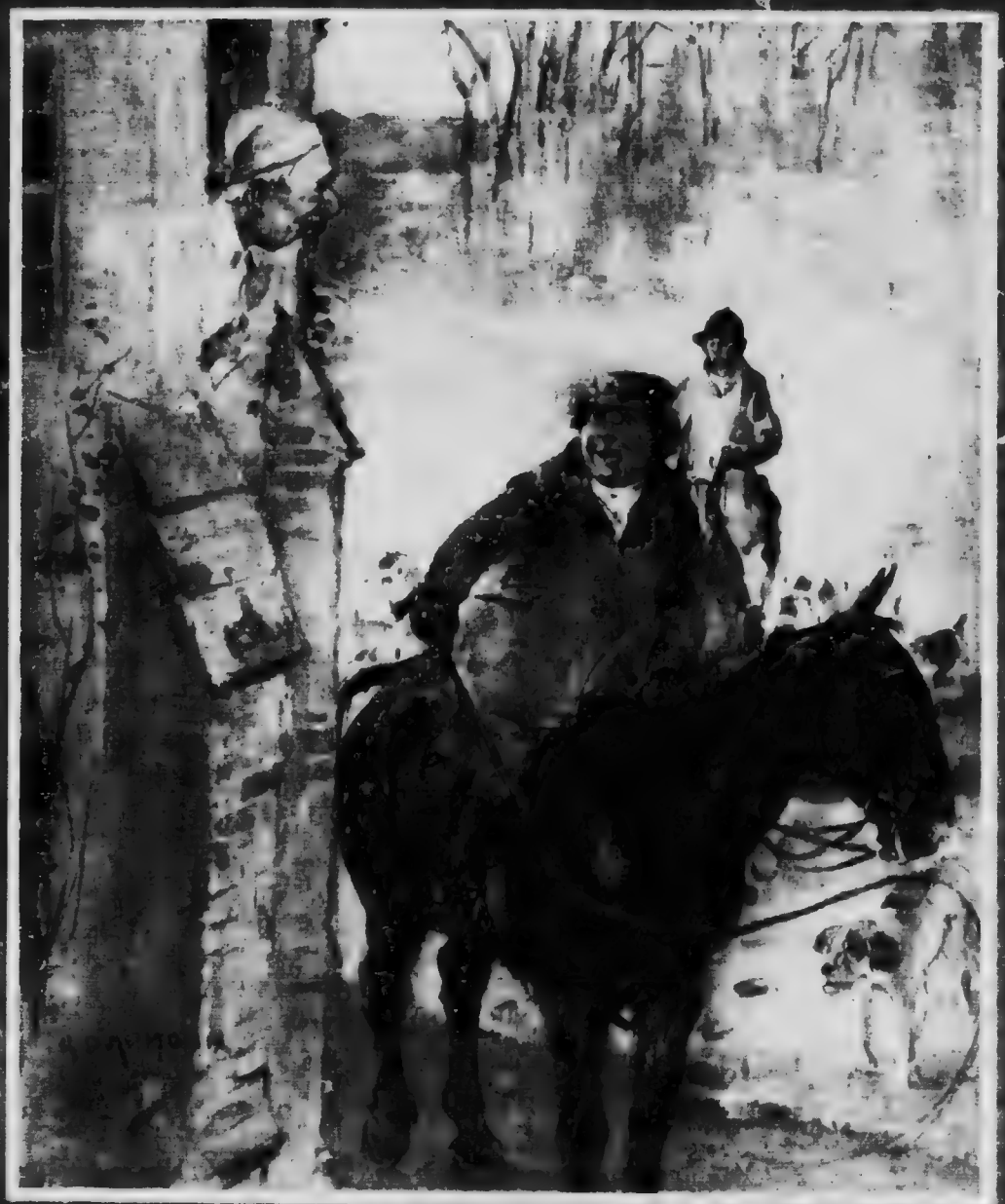


could think of. In the excess of his energy—he overshot the mark, and kept right on, instead of turning short up a track on the left. The one he kept, from a uniformly rotten surface, now became alternately soft and hard, the water standing in the hollows like baths, and these, Arterxerxes, as if suspicious of treachery, commenced leaping, but possibly finding the trouble greater than he expected, he soon took to blundering through them, squirting the muddy water about in all directions. The forest still continued the same forlorn, unprosperous-looking place; where the wet stood, moss grey, aguish-looking trees were dying by the middle, while higher up, the oaks battled with the briars and other smothering rubbish. Our master, however, was too busy to observe anything of the sort—all he knew was, that it was werry bad riding. The sound of the horn on the left first caused him to pause and ponder whether he was on the track of Pigg. There were footmarks, but not so fresh as his should be. Another unmis-

takable twang, and Mr. Jorrocks determined to alter his course. Where all was so bad, there was nothing to choose. Accordingly he swung Arterxerxes short round, and turned him up another rushy, waterlogged track, that seemed to lead in the direction of the horn. Desperately bad the riding was. The nature of the ground seemed to change, and from hop-pole-like ash and alder, to be stocked with nothing but stunted birch. The soil was black and peaty, with here and there the outline of a long-subsided drain.

'Blow me tight,' muttered Mr. Jorrocks, shortening his hold of his horse, 'I wish I mayn't be gettin' bogged,' and scarcely were the words out of his mouth ere Arterxerxes floundered up to the shoulders in a moss hag, shooting our friend softly over his head on to his side.

'*W-o-a-y 'oss! W-o-a-a-y!*' roared our master, now kicking on his back like a lively turtle, expecting to have the struggling animal a top of him every moment.

'W-o-a-y 'oss! w-o-a-a-y!' repeated Jorrocks,

jerking himself off to the side. The horse beat and plunged, and groaned and heaved, still stemming the black slough of despond, until he got fairly through, when after standing a second or two to shake himself, he set off at an unprovoked trot, leaving our master in a most unhappy state of bewilderment as to how he should ever catch him, or get home without him.

'Dash the beggar,' groaned Jorrocks, as he saw him rolling his great hind-quarters away in the distance—'Dash the beggar, but I wish I was a top on 'im, I'd give 'im summut to run for'; so saying, our master gathered himself together, and skirting the moss hag, commenced the unpleasant performance of running in top boots. Squish, squash, splash, he floundered, now over the insteps, now up to the ankles, now almost up to the knees. He soon began to sob and sigh—'Oh dear! oh dear!' groaned he, 'did ever mortal man see sich a road—might as well try to run in a river. And that confounded quad,' continued he, eyeing Arterxerxes still on the move. 'Dash my

vig, but I'd give ye summut to run for if I had 'old on ye—I'd make ye cry "Capevi!" my frind. Drot the road!' exclaimed he, as he plunged into a rush-concealed rut, and squirted the dirty water up into his face. 'Well this is a pretty performance,' continued he, mopping himself with a great crimson bandana—'Beats all others into fits. *Con*-found these bye-days. They're always gettin' on me into grief. And now the brute's gone altogether,' as the vista closed without Arterxerxes on the scene. ''Ark! I 'ear 'ounds. No, they're crows. Well, if this isn't a sickener, I don't know wot is—might as well try to run i' the mud off 'Ungerford stairs, as in this sludge. Shouldn't like to clean these bouts I know,' continued he, looking down on his black, and all black, tops. A bit of sound ground again tempted him into a trot, and at length brought him to the rising ground up which great Arterxerxes had disappeared. 'Oh dear! oh dear!' groaned Mr. Jorrocks as a stitch in his side suddenly stopped him. 'Oh dear! oh dear! I'm regularly floored.

Might as well try to follow Halbert Smith hup Mont Blanc as Arterxerxes hup this incorrigible mountain'; so saying our heavily-perspiring master sought the support of a fallen willow, and distributing himself equitably among its branches, sofa fashion, proceeded to bewail his lamentable condition. 'Oh dear! oh dear!' groaned he, 'was there ever sich an misfortunit indiwidual as John Jorrocks! was there ever an independent British grocer made sich a football on by fortin? Tossed about the world like an old 'at. Tempted from the 'olesomest, the plisantest, the most salubrisome street i' London to take these 'ounds, and then be drawn into this unpardonable wilderness. Nothin' but rushes, and grass that Nebuchadnezzar 'imself would turn up his nose at. Oh dear! oh dear!' continued he, as his thoughts reverted to home and Handley Cross, 'shall never see my dinner this day, Torbay soles with Budle cockle sauce, Dartmoor forest mutton, puddin', and taturs under the meat, 'stead of starvin' in a dreary desert—happed up by cock robins or

other benevolent birds'; a thought that so distracted our master as to cause him to start and turn in his couch, when the rotten main prop to his back giving way, he came crashing and smashing to the ground.

'*There!*' ejaculated Mr. Jorrocks, '*there!*' repeated he, as he lay among the rotten fragments. 'Fallen a 'underd feet from the grund! Broke every bone in my skin, I *do* believe. Bet a guinea 'at to a 'alf-crown gossamer I 'aven't a 'ole bone i' my body.' So saying our master having carefully shaken first one limb and then another, to ascertain the amount of the mischief, rose slowly fr m the wet ground, and after anathematising the deceptive, unfriendly tree, resumed the tracking of his horse up the hill. His boots were now well 'salivated' as he would say, and the cold bog-water poached and churned as he went. But if his feet were cold, his temper was warm, and various were the recreations he promised Arterxerxes. He would ride 'his tail off,' then recollecting how little he had, he 'would

ride him till he dropped.' Then he would 'skin him alive, and make his hide into a hair trunk'—then he would cut it into whip thongs—next into shoe-strings—finally he would give him 'to the first mugger he met.'

As Mrs. Glasse would say, however, 'first catch your horse,' and this seemed a remote possibility, for though our master in the course of a two miles' tramp, which he called ten, did get a view of him once, the grass was of too coarse and uninviting a character to induce the animal to take more than a passing snatch as he went, which he did at a pace that seemed well calculated to last for ever. At length our master was fairly exhausted, and coming to a part of the forest that ran out into rocks and sandy heathery hills, he threw himself upon his back on a large flat stone, and kicking up first one leg and then the other, to let the bog-water out of his boots, moaned and groaned audibly. Beginning at a guinea, he bid up to a hundred and twenty, to be back at Handley Cross, and two hundred

and fifty to be back in Great Coram Street, clear of the 'ounds and all belonging to them. And he vowed that if Diana would only 'ave the kindness to come to his assistance that once, he would never trouble her with any more of his vagaries. No, *indeed* he wouldn't, he would sell his 'ounds and his 'osses, burn his boots and his Beckford, and drive about in a pill-box the rest of his life.

'Mind the bull!' *Page* 122

CHAPTER VI

THE SHORTEST DAY

MR. JORROCKS'S next adventure in the hunting line originated in a very furious letter from a gentleman, signing himself 'John Gollarfield, farmer, Hardpye Hill,' complaining bitterly of the devastation of his hen-roost, and calling loudly for vengeance against the foxes. Accordingly our master made a meet for Hardpye Hill, instead of Langton Pound, as he intended.

The road to the hill lying through some roomy enclosures, and Christmas having let loose its enterprise upon the country, great was the spurting and racing that marked the line there. Mr. Jorrocks, arrayed in his best pink, jogged pompously on with his cavalcade, receiving the

marked attention of the country. Arrived at the hill, he turned into a grass field to give his hounds a roll and hear the news of the day—how Miss Glancey was after Captain Small—how Mrs. Buss had captivated old Frill. Then, when the cantering, smoking cover hack swells came up, they resolved themselves into a committee of taste, scrutinising this hound and that, passing their opinions on the pack generally, and on the Bugginson hounds in particular. Some thought they were coarse, some thought they were common; but when they heard they were drafts from the Quorn, they were unanimous in thinking they must be good—especially when Mr. Jorrocks broadly hinted he had given Day ten guineas a couple for them. The noise the party made prevented their hearing sundry ominous moans and lows in the neighbourhood, which gradually rose to a roar, until a simultaneous crash, and cry of 'Mind the bull!' drew all eyes to the bank of the adjoining fence, where, with head down and tail up, a great roan bull

was seen poising himself preparatory to making a descent upon the field. Down he came with a roar that shook the earth to the very centre, and sent the field flying in all directions. Mr. Jorrocks, who was on foot among his hounds, immediately rushed to his horse, which Ben had let loose, but making a bad shot at the stirrup, he became a *point d'appui* for the bull, who after him with a vigour and determination that looked very like a finisher. Our master was carried, clinging to the neck, half across the field in a 'now on, now off' sort of way that would have made any one feel very comfortable who had an annuity depending on his life. At last he got fairly into his saddle, and setting himself down to ride, he threw his heart boldly over a stiff 'on and off,' and shoved Xerxes at it in a way that proved too many for the bull. Ploughing up the pasture with his feet, in his effort to stop himself as he neared it, he tossed his great wide-horned head in the air, and uttering a frightful bellow that thundered through

the valley and reverberated on Hardpye Hill, he turned, tail erect, to take a run at some one else. And having succeeded by the aid of gates in placing a couple more enclosures between them, Mr. Jorrocks sought a rising ground from which he thought over the magnitude of his adventure, and how he would like to have Leech to draw him taking the leap. And having gained breath as he magnified it, and having duly congratulated himself upon his escape, he out with his horn and blew his hounds together, leaving Hardpye Hill as he came, and entering among the anathemas in his Journal the following:—

'*Con*-found all farmers say I, wot don't tie up their bulls!'

A bad beginning in this case did not make a good ending, for though our master drew on till dark, which it was at half-past two, he never had a touch of a fox, and he sent word to Gollarfield, by the mole-catcher, that he was a 'reg'lar 'umbug,' and Pigg desired the man to add that he would fight him for what he pleased.

CHAPTER VII

POMPONIUS EGO

THE great Mr. Ego having exalted the horns of the principal hunts in the kingdom, was now spending his time pleasantly between London and Paris—living at Calais—from whence he emerged at short notice to attend buttering matches in England; and the glowing account he gave of some great man's establishment, caused Mr. Jorrocks to pant for that enduring fame which statuary and stationery best can give. Accordingly he made the overture contained in the following letter:—

'DEAR MR. HEGO,

'If your intercourse with Dukes and other great guns o' the world leaves any margin for the doin's of the pop-guns o' the chase, I shall be werry 'appy if you will come here and take a look at our most provincial

pack. In course I needn't tell you that my 'ouse is not large enough to require a kiver 'ack to canter from the dinin'- to the drawin'-room, neither is the pack on a par with many you have seen; but I can give you a good blow-out, both in the way of wittles and drink, and shall be 'appy to "put you up," as they say in the cut-me-downs, on as good a quad as I can, and show you sich sport as the country will afford. *Entre nous*, as we say in France, I want to be famous, and you know how to do it. In course mum 's the word.

'Yours to serve,

'JOHN JORROCKS.

'*PS.*—Compts. to Julius Seizeher and all the ancient Romans when you write.

'Diana Lodge, Handley Cross Spa.
'To POMPONIUS EGO, ESQ., Calais.'

The following is Mr. Ego's answer:—

'DEAR MR. JORROCKS,

'You remind me of Catullus! None but the old Latian could have put the point as you do. D—m all dukes! I'm for mercantile life—*£. s. d.*—I shall have great satisfaction in inspecting your pack, on Thursday next, which I have no doubt I shall find all I can desire. Pick me out an easy-going, sure-footed, safe-leaping horse, with a light mouth, and let him have a Whippy-saddle

on—I can't ride in any other. I like a bedroom with a southern aspect—the feathers above the mattress, if you please; wax-candles and Eau de Cologne, will pitch the tune for the rest. Compliments to Mrs. Jorrocks, from, dear Jorrocks,

'Yours very truly,

'POMPONIUS EGO.

'*PS.*—What would you like to be done in? The *Q. R.*,[1] the *H. T.*, *Fraser*, *Blackwood*, *New Monthly*, *Encyclopedia*, *Life*, *Field*, *Era*, or what?

'To JOHN JORROCKS, ESQ.,
'Master of Fox-Hounds,
'Diana Lodge, Handley Cross Spa.'

This point being arranged, great preparations were made for the important event. Hounds may go on for centuries without being known beyond the limits of their country, but the one day that brings the Inspector-General lives for ever in the page of history. Where, then, is the master of hounds, where the huntsman, where the whip, where the member of a hunt, whose

[1] 'Q. R.' stands for *Quarterly Review*; 'H. T.,' for *Heavy Triumvirate*, which carries the lead, known in the trade as the *Old and New Sporting Magazines*, and the *Sporting Review*.

heart does not beat responsive with Mr. Jorrocks's on this trying occasion? Who, in the familiar language of low life, does not wish him well out of it?

. . . . . .

'Now, James,' said our master to his huntsman, as they stood in the kennel-yard looking over the hounds, a few days before the appointed visit, 'you must get all on the square; the great Pomponius Hego is a comin', and we shall be all down in black and wite.'

'Who's he?' inquired Pigg, scratching his head.

'Vot! not know Pomponius Hego!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, in astonishment; 'you sure*lie* don't mean to say so.'

'Ar' dinna ken him, ar's sure,' replied Pigg, with the greatest indifference. 'Is he a skeulmaister?'

'A *skeulmaister!*' repeated Mr. Jorrocks, with a sneer and an indignant curl of his lip; 'a skeulmaister! *No!*—a master of 'unting—not an

'Gabriel Junks.' *Page* 140

M.F.H., like me, but a man wot makes hobserwations on M.F.H.s, their packs, their 'osses, their 'untsmen—their everything, in fact.'

'What's he de that for?' inquired Pigg, with surprise.

'Vy, that the world at large may know what he thinks on 'em, to be sure. He prints all he sees, hears, or thinks in a book.'

Pigg.—'Ye dinna say se!'

'Quite true, I assure you,' replied Mr. Jorrocks; 'and if by any unlucky chance he blames an 'untsman, or condemns a pack, it's all dickey with them for ever; for no livin' man dare contradict him, and every one swears by wot he says.'

'Woons man,' replied Pigg, in a pucker, 'we maun be uncommon kittle then ar' guess.'

'You must exert your hutmost powers,' replied Mr. Jorrocks most emphatically; 'for dash my vig, if we fail, I, even I—John Jorrocks himself, will go perfectly mad with rage and wexation.'

'He'll ken all aboot the hunds and huntin'

then, ar's warn'd,' replied Pigg, catching the infection of fear.

Mr. Jorrocks.—'Oh yes!—at least he writes about them; and no one disputes print. Oh dear! oh dear! I almost fear I've made a mess o' myself, by axin' of him to come. I question if the world would not have been as 'appy without the mighty Hego. Hoil, butter, sugar, soap, all that sort o' thing is werry pleasant; but then—oh, 'orror! the idea of being rubbed the wrong way by Hego! *Death itself would be better!*'

Pigg.—'Hout, tout!—fear nout! there's nout to boggle a man! Gin I were ye, with all yeer brass, ar' wadn't care for neone.'

Mr. Jorrocks.—'Ah! but, Pigg!—think of hambition!—think of fame!—think of that summut arter life wot prompts men to great hactions! Here, for five-and-thirty years, have I been a hardent follower of the chase—loved it, oh, 'eavens! for its own sake, and not from any hanxious longins arter himmortality! and now, when greatness has been thrust upon me—when

I shines forth an M.F.H.—to think that all may be dashed from me, and 'stead of reignin' King of 'Andley Cross—'stead of bein' the great and renowned John Jorrocks—I may be dashed t' oblivion! Oh, Pigg!—hambition is a frightful, a dreadful thing!'

Pigg.—'*Hout, tout,* fear nout. Does he ride, or nabbut looks at pack at cover-soide loike?'

Mr. Jorrocks.—'Both, both—fust, he'll come and look us all over, ax the name of this 'ound and that—call 'em level—inquire 'ow each is bred—talk of Hosbaldeston's Furrier, Lord Enry's Contest, or Sutton's Trueman—look at this nag—then at that—ax their pedigrees—their hages—their prices—their everythings—vether we summers them in the 'ouse or in the field—do a little about 'ard meat—'ow much corn they get—if we bruise it—vether we split our beans, or give them whole—then when we throws off he marks each motion—sees whether we put in at the right end of the cover or the wrong—observes whether the men have 'ands equal to

their nerves, or nerves equal to their 'ands; books their seats and their names—not their seats by the coach, mind—but their seats in the saddle. To read his accounts of the runs you'd fancy he was everywhere at once, both before, behind, and above—with the fox—with the 'ounds—with the first, and with the last man in the field— › knowin'ly does he describe every twist, every turn, every bend of the run. Oh, Pigg! my excellent, my beautiful Pigg! now that the fatal day 'proaches, and I sees the full brightness o' my indiscretion starin' me i' the face, I begins to repent havin' axed him to come. Wot can fame do for Jorrocks? I have as much tin as I wants, and needn't care a copper for no man. Would that I was well out o' the mess!'

'Never fear,' replied Pigg, 'here be good like h'unds, and yeer husses can gan; if we de but find, the deuce is in it if we don't cook him up a run.'

'Oh, Pigg! my buck of a Pigg!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, 'those *ifs* are the deuce and all

in 'unting—There's nothin' so difficult to ride as an "if." *If* we find a fox, then there's the difficulty of gettin' well away with him; or *if* we do get well away, then there's the chance of his bein' 'eaded back, or of there bein' no scent, or of his takin' a bad line, or of his bein' chased by a cur, or of his gainin' an earth we don't know of, or of a great banging 'are misleadin' the 'ounds, or of the fox beatin' us disgracefully at the far end—these things are dreadful to the anxious mind of an M.F.H. at all times, but *'orrible,* most *'orrible,* at a time like the prisent.'

'Dinna fear,' replied Pigg, 'dinna fear—you'll see he'll be nowt but mortal man after all. If you want to kill a fox, gan to big wood, and have somebody there with black bitch.'

'Black bitch,' said Mr. Jorrocks thoughtfully, 'black bitch—Wot should we want with black bitch when we have all the 'ounds out?'

'*Hout,* thou fondy!' said Pigg, 'doesn't thou ken what black bitch is?'

'No I doesn't—unless it's a dog's wife.'

'Dog's wife!' roared Pigg; 'Ne sike thing. It's a *gun*, man! Just pop a few shot corns into fox's hint-legs, and h'unds 'ill soon catch him.'

'My vig!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, with an air of sudden enlightenment, 'I've often seen chaps in welweteen with guns at cover sides, but never knew what they were there for. Ah, but,' added he, with a shake of his head, 'Hego will be up to the black-bitch rig—No, no, that won't do—no use trying to 'oax him—it must be summut genuine. Oh, Pigg, if you could but manage to give him a *real* tickler, so that he might have summut good to put in his book, the gratitude of John Jorrocks should rest with you for ever and ever—you should drink brandy out of a quart pot for breakfast, dinner, and supper.'

'You dinna say se!' exclaimed Pigg with delight. 'Let's see—dang'd if ar ken—yes, ar de tee—run a drag and sheck a bag fox at far end loike.'

Mr. Jorrocks.—'That von't do—*no not it.* He'll be sure to find out, and trounce us to all eternity; besides, if any of the Bell's Lifers were to catch us, they'd never let us 'ear the end on 't.'

'Not they,' replied Pigg: 'Nebody 'ill find out if ye de but had your gob—start i' big wood—run drag round—bother him well—then out o'ur big loup—give him summut to glower at, instead o' h'unds.'

'No, Pigg, no,' replied Mr. Jorrocks, shaking his head and jingling a handful of silver in his pantaloon pocket; 'it must be summut more genuine—*Tally ho! yonder he goes!* then elbows and legs—elbows and legs'; Mr. Jorrocks suiting the action to the word, by straddling and working an imaginary horse with his arms.

'Give him that tee,' replied Pigg; 'stick chap up a tree to holloa away—another on a hill to had up hat, and so on.'

'Ah, but so many cuks will spoil the broth, Pigg; so many cuks will spoil the broth. S'pose, for a moment, one should peach! S'pose Hego

should find us out! I should sit on pins—on wool-combers—with nothin' but summer drawers on, till the account appeared, and then I question I should have courage to cut the pages. Oh, hambition! hambition! wot a troublesome warmint you are! Wish I'd let the great man alone.'

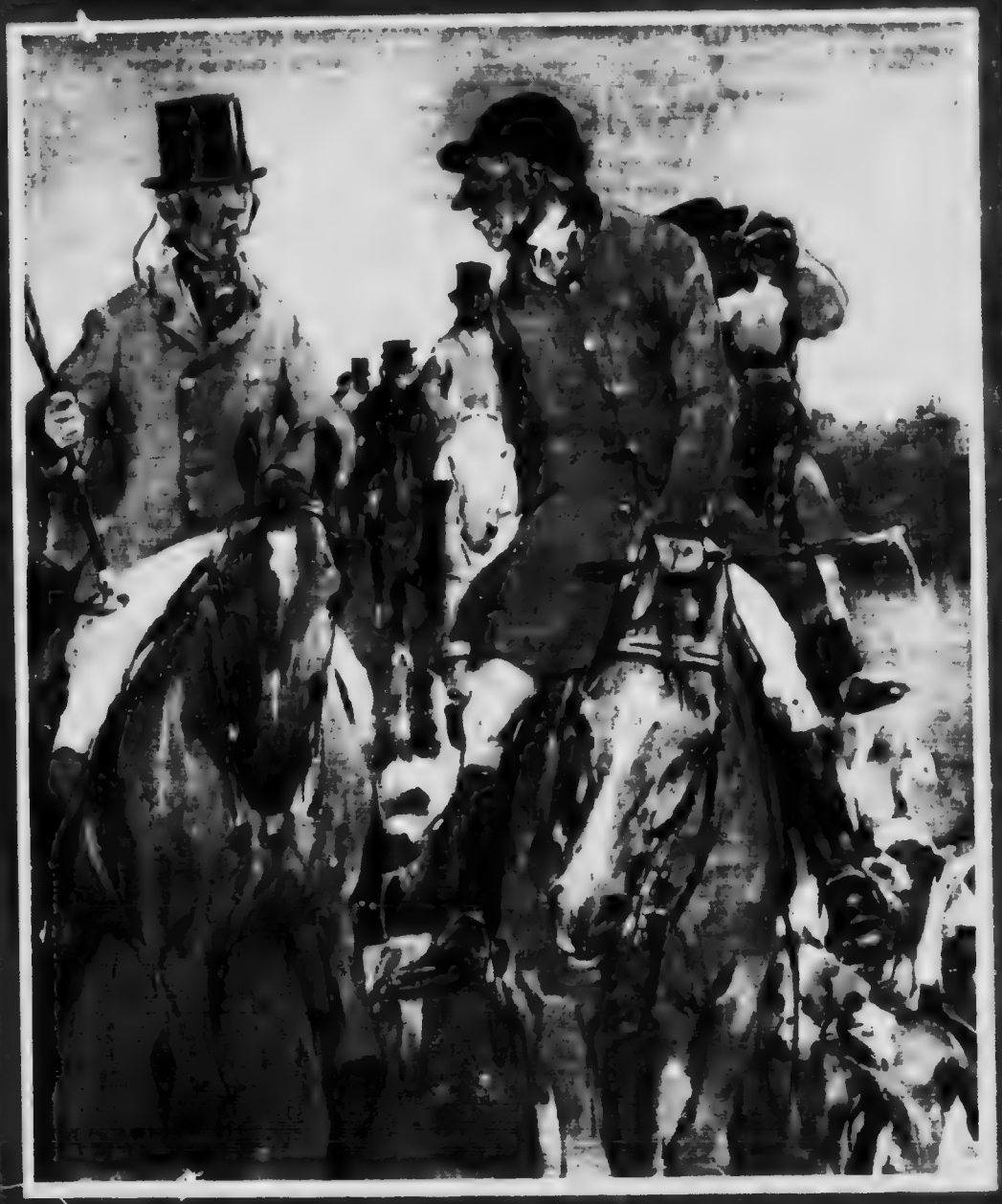
Pigg.—'A, man alive niver fear; he cannot de thee ne harm. Let me manish him,—ar'll give him summut to bragg on.'

Mr. Jorrocks.—'I vish I dirst—you Scotchmen are cliver fellers; but s'pose he should smell a rat, 'ow he would trounce us, as much to show his own 'cuteness, as to punish us for our imperance!'

'Ye've nout to fear, ar tell ye,' replied Pigg confidently; 'ye've nout to fear; just leave it arl to me, and had your jaw about it, and dinna call me a Scotchman, and keep thy bit bowdekite quiet—ar'll manish matters.'

With much fear, and many misgivings for his rashness in asking Ego to come, Mr. Jorrocks at length consented to intrust the management

'Who told you I was Ego?' . . . 'Who tell't me? Why, Jorrocks, to be sure! Who else should?' *Page* 143



of the day's sport to his northern huntsman and the feeder.

By these it was arranged to run a drag of aniseed and red herring over some of the best of their country, and to turn down a fox at the far end, in some convenient, unsuspicious-looking place. The evening before Mr. Ego was to arrive, James Pigg communicated the find, the run, and the finish, to Mr. Jorrocks, with such other information as would enable our master to ride to points without exciting suspicion, and Mr. Jorrocks undertook to say as much to Benjamin as would put the boy on his mettle, without letting him too much into the secret.

CHAPTER VIII

THE POMPONIUS EGO DAY

A THICK white rind powdered the face of nature, and Mr. Jorrocks found himself with a beautiful silver-foliaged window in the morning. Still the evergreens in the garden exhibited no symptoms of a nipping, and as the night-clouds cleared off and the sun stood forth all lurid in the firmament, he congratulated himself on the appearance of opening day. Mrs. Jorrocks, Belinda, Stobbs, Betsy, and Benjamin were up with the lark, all busy preparing for the great, well-known unknown. A fly was despatched to the Datton station of the Lily-whitesand railway to meet him, and punctual to his time, Ego turned out at Diana Lodge, enveloped in shawls, numerous greatcoats, and

a pair of French-jointed clogs to keep his feet warm. Mutual salutations being over, and having got rid of his husks, breakfast was attacked with a true railway appetite—kidneys, chops, eggs, muffins, crumpets, toast, red herrings, all the delicacies of the season in short, that make one's mouth water to write, vanished in succession, aided by large draughts of undeniable tea and coffee from 'the Lane,' as Mr. Jorrocks calls his place of business. At length they completely topped up, and after begging some brandy to put in his flask, Ego rose from his seat and began pacing about the room and looking out of the window, as men are in the habit of doing who want to be commencing a 'New Series' of the periodical occupations of life. Stobbs had a bad headache—or pretended to have one, not wanting to be butter'd.

Ten o'clock came, and as it struck, James Pigg and Benjamin appeared outside the white rails before Diana Lodge, clad in their best habiliments, mounted, and each leading a horse.

Uncommonly *spicy* they all looked, for Pigg, regardless of expense, had generously divided a penny's-worth of ginger among the four, so that their tails stuck up like hat pegs, and, as if in sympathy with the horses, Gabriel Junks flew on to the summit of the gateway arch, and expanded a glorious tail to the rays of the sun, at the same time setting up a scream that startled the horses. Forth sallied Ego and Jorrocks; up went the bedroom window, for Betsy to look out, Mrs. Jorrocks appeared framed in the lower one, with a face of most rubicund hue, while Belinda peeped past the green and white chintz curtain, and had her glimpse of the scene.

'There!' said Mr. Jorrocks, pulling up short at the gate, seizing Ego by the arm as he pointed to his stud; 'there! there are a lot of nags for you—none of your cat-legged, tumble-down, kick-me-off, brik-my-neck, split-my-skull beggars; but real seasoned 'unters, sure and steady, with an eye for each foot, and one over. Binjimin,' said he, turning to the boy, 'take up those stirrups

three 'oles, and don't let me catch you ridin' like a dragon. Now, Mr. Hego, be arter mountin'—time's precious, and punctuality is the purliteness of princes. There,' said he, as Ego got himself into his saddle on Talavera, 'you are mounted—delightful! make a pictor for Leech! Gave a mint o' money for that 'oss, but I doesn't care a dump 'bout money, further nor as it enables one to pursue the plisurs o' the chase.—Pigg, put Arterxerxes next the rails, so that I may get on easy. *Whoay, 'oss! Whoay!*' roared Jorrocks, as the horse began fidgeting and hoisting, on feeling his foot in the stirrup. '*Whoay!* I say, you hugly brute!' adding, 'rot ye, but I'll take the gay insolence out o' your tail afore night.' A bold effort lodged him in the first floor of the saddle, and, gathering up his reins, Jorrocks turned Arterxerxes' head from the house, the horse walking with his fore legs, and kicking with his hind ones, an example immediately followed by the other three. Away they all go, kicking and snorting, amid the renewed

screams of the peacock and the shouts of the little boys who had congregated about.

'And one and all aloud declare
'Twas a fit sight for country fair,
Far better than a dancing bear.'

The kennel reached, the pack were soon round Pigg's horse's heels, and after a few consequential cracks of his whip, and cries of 'Go on, hounds! go on! *to him! to him!*' from Benjamin, as they proceeded through the streets, which, as usual, were all commotion to see them pass, they cleared the town and entered upon the hedgerows of the country.

Jorrocks now began to feel the full force of his situation, and inwardly wished himself well out of it.

'A nice*ish* lot of hounds,' observed Ego casually, as he brought his horse alongside James Pigg, 'to look him over,' as he calls it; and Pigg, who was rather sprung, instead of capping him, gave him a most unceremonious stare.

'A dom'd *nice* pack! ar should say,' replied Pigg.

'Humph!' said Ego to himself, 'a rummish genius this, I guess—I am Pom-po-nius Ego,' observed he, with an air of annihilation.

'Sae they say,' replied Pigg, turning his quid. 'What's your cracks?'

'What's your *whats?*' repeated Ego to himself, without being able to hit off the scent. 'Who told you I was Ego?' inquired he, after a pause, during which he kept scrutinising Pigg.

Pigg.—'Whe tell't me? Why, Jorrocks, to be sure! Whe else should?'

'*Whe else should?*' repeated Ego, in disgust, 'you're a pretty fellow for a huntsman.'

'Ye'll be wantin' a ticket, ar's warn'd,' observed Pigg, pulling one of his 5s. pink pasteboards out of his waistcoat pocket and tendering it to him.

Ego looked unutterable things.

'Well, my frind, and vot do you think of the 'ounds?' inquired Mr. Jorrocks, who had had a suck at his donkey, riding up at this critical period. 'Some of the real sort for makin' them

cry "Capevi"—all workmen—no skirtin', babblin', overrunnin' beggars kept for show merely because they are 'andsome — 'andsome is wot 'andsome does, is my happhorism?'

'A very good motto, Mr. Jorrocks,' observed Ego; 'a very good motto. We shall see presently what they are made of. They seem a goodish sort of hound—level—if anything, rather full of flesh.'

'A werry good fault, too, at this time o' year; we shall soon work them fine enough,' replied Mr. Jorrocks.

'As fine as Sam Nichol had his, eh?—that poor John Warde used to say a man had only to take his shaving-pot into the kennel, lather his face, and scrape his face with the back of a hound—*he, he, he!* good joke that, Mr. Jorrocks, eh?'

'Haw! haw! haw! werry good joke, Mr. Hego, werry good joke, indeed—have laughed at it *werry* often—werry old friend o' yours and mine, that joke. S'pose it will be due again

Ar niver gets off!' *Page 167*

soon? Shall be ready to laugh at it again when it appears.'

'Mixed pack, I see,' now observed Ego, who had been scrutinising the hounds as they trotted quietly along.

'Mixed pack,' repeated Jorrocks gaily, adding: 'dogs I thinks correct the wolatile natur' o' the betches. I 'old wi' Mr. Craven Smith,' continued he, 'that though the betches are quicker nor the dogs, they do not always show the same sport, or kill the most foxes—another thing is, I likes plenty o' music, and the betches are not so free wi' their tongues as the dogs, and sometimes slip away without one's knowing it, which is inconwenient, as it doesn't look well for a gen'l'man, 'specially for an M.F.H., to go gallopin' 'bout the country, exclaimin', "'Ave you seen my 'ounds? 'ave you seen my 'ounds?"'

'That will not often happen with you, Mr. Jorrocks, I should think,' observed Ego, smiling at our friend's substantial form.

'Not often,' replied our master, with a chuck

of the chin; 'not often—still it *might*, and one doesn't like bein' left i' the lurch.'

'Certainly not,' assented Ego; 'certainly not—nothing like being on good terms with your hounds and your banker.'

'Nothin',' replied Jorrocks, ''specially wi' sich beauties as mine,' looking lovingly down upon the pack.

'Some fairish-looking animals among them, observed Ego, with up-turned lip.

'Fairish-lookin' hanimals 'mong 'em,' retorted Jorrocks; 'fairish-lookin' hanimals 'mong 'em; I tells ye wot,' continued he, drawing breath; 'if they're not 'zactly the 'andsomest pack o' 'ounds i' the kingdom, they're the steadiest—the wisest—and the best!'

'*In-deed!*' bowed Ego, with a supercilious smile.

'True guiders of a scent in 'ard runnin', close, patient 'unters with a cold scent, and as stout as steel.'

'*In-deed!*' bowed Ego again.

'I'm not a conceited hass,' observed Jorrocks, boiling up, 'wot thinks everything I 'ave is the best; and if I 'ears of good blood anywhere, I'll 'ave it—as I said afoor, I doesn't care twopence 'bout tin, further nor as it enables me to pursue the plisures o' the chase.'

'That's your ticket!' exclaimed Ego.

'Sink ye, ye wadn't ha' it just now,' observed Pigg over his shoulder, thinking the great man had changed his mind, and wanted his insurance ticket against hunting accidents.

'To hobtain a good run,' continued Mr. Jorrocks vehemently, without noticing either of these interruptions, 'to hobtain a good run, your 'ounds should not only 'ave good abilities, but they should be hexperienced and well 'quainted with each other. To guide a scent well over a country for a length o' time, through all the hintricacies and difficulties o' the chase, requires first chop abilities,' added he, with a hearty slap of his thigh.

'So it does,' assented Ego.

'Keep the tambourine a-roulin'!' exclaimed Pigg, who had been reining in his horse to hear his master bounce.

'*Yooi doit!* there, Warrior!' added he, with a crack of his whip to a hound that was leading others out of ear-shot.

'There's a fine 'ound,' observed Mr. Jorrocks, again arresting the great man's attention, by pointing out old Ravager, now trotting singly along the footpath.

'You'll most likely be wishin' to say summut soapy and plisant 'bout the pack, and you can't lay it too thick on to him—Ravager, by Lord Yarborough's Rallywood out of his Ringlet. Would gladly give fifty guineas a couple for a few more sich. That's a nice dog too, Fugleman,' pointing a speckled black and white one out. 'Fugleman,[1] by the Beaufort Potentate out of Foljambe's Frantic; so's that,' pointing to a mealy-coloured hound; 'Dorimont, by Drake's Duster out of the Belvoir Blameless. Dorimont! old bouy!'

[1] All gammon! They were some of Bugginson's lot.

continued Mr. Jorrocks, rising in his stirrups, and chucking him a bit of biscuit for answering to his name. 'Dorimont, old bouy! mind the heyes of Hengland are 'pon you! In fact,' continued Mr. Jorrocks, sousing himself into his great saddle, and dropping his voice as he took Ego confidentially by the elbow, 'in fact, you can't say too much in praise o' the pack—Quads neither. I'm not a wain man,' continued Mr. Jorrocks, 'far from it—but merit should be noticed, and it's not never of no manner of use keeping one's candle under a bushel. *Is it?*' asked he anxiously.

'Not a bit!' replied Ego, with another slight upward curl of his lip.

Our friends then bumped on for some time in silence, Jorrocks wondering what Ego thought of him, and Ego wondering if Jorrocks was really the liberal, indifferent man about money he represented himself to be. Jorrocks was half inclined to ask Ego how he proposed buttering him, lest there might be any mistake, but just as he was

going to pop the tender question, Arterxerxes gave such a terrible stumble, as nearly sent him out of his saddle. He then took to jagging and objurgating the horse, which put it out of his head and by the time he got himself and his horse appeased, he was thinking of his dinner.

As they proceeded, the spangled hedges dropped their jewels—the fields gradually resumed their pristine hue—and on reaching Bumpmead Heath, all nature smiled with the sweetness of premature spring. What a concourse was there! Flys, carriages, gigs, hunters, ha donkeys, all to see an author on horseback!

'There!' said Mr. Jorrocks, pointing to the field as they turned from the road and entered the wide expanding common, 'wot an 'unt mine is! Shall present them to you in reg'lar rotation —largest subscribers fust, and so on, down to the three-guinea coves. This little podgy cock on the cob is Latitat the lawyer. Bein' a werry thick-winded little sinner, they call him Whezey, junior. Yon bouy on the brown, that is fidgetin'

about as though he didn't like his load, is Squire Barnington, the man wot wanted to be master; he gives fifty. My missis and his don't 'it it, but we are werry good friends. He buys 'osses like a brick, without bringin' all the relations and frinds of this world to 'sist 'im. Barnington!' holloaed Jorrocks to him, 'come and be presented to the mighty Hego. This be him, with the bird's-eye fogle round his squeeze—coolish mornin' you see, and Hegotists[1] are scarce—keeps his throat warm.' Mr. Barnington and Ego made mutual salutations with their hats. 'Hooi, Fleecy!' roared Jorrocks to his secretary, who was poking about among the group on a long-tailed rat of a pony, with a slip of paper in his hand and a pencil between his teeth, 'come and pay your devours to Hego, the man wot makes us all famous. This be my sec.,' observed Mr. Jorrocks to Ego, adding in a lower tone, 'Does a little word-combin' himself at times—signs himself Junius Secundus—*you twig!*'

[1] Nothing of the sort; we wish they were.—AUTHOR.

'Proud to make the personal acquaintance of Junius Secundus,' observed Ego, bowing and laying his hand upon his breast. 'Often heard of him.' Fleeceall brings his hat in contact with his heel.

'This be old Barleycorn,' observed Mr. Jorrocks, stopping a jolly-looking farmer, in dark clothes, on a good-looking brown horse; 'a werry good friend to 'unting—always goes fust over his own wheat.'

Pomponius Ego vouchsafed him a bow.

'Here comes a cove now,' observed Jorrocks, laying hold of Ego's arm. 'Jest look at this chap i' the cap and cut-away coat, with the bridle all over buckles. "Dis arter six," I calls him. His mother gets her tea o' me, and when this young blade came to settle the bill, he wanted dis arter six. Dis arter six!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks with an emphasis. 'As if anybody ever 'eard o' dis arter six! The dirty-looking dog in the plum-coloured coat and dingy Napoleons wot's jest joined 'im, we call "Two upon Ten"—

'Had bye, ard man! Sink! ar'll be dingin on ye down! Ye've ne carle to ride for reputation!' *Page* 170

they 'unt in couples, Dis arter six and Two upon ten. They took poor Two for a thief, and wen he went into the shops, they used to sing out "*Two upon ten! two upon ten!*" meanin', two eyes on ten fingers—haw, haw, haw!' chuckled our master, adding, 'I won't interduce neither o' them. But 'ere comes a good chap,' continued he, 'Ridge the slater, gives ten pund, and pays it too. Slates, old bouy!' continued Jorrocks, beckoning him, 'come this way, and let me be the makin' on you. Let me interduce you to the great Mr. Hego, King o' the Chase, I may call 'im.' Ridge made as bountiful a bow as though he expected an order to roof in a palace.

''Ere's another good chap,' continued Mr. Jorrocks, 'Pigott the master plasterer—M.P., as he calls himself. 'Ere, Piggy,' continued Jorrocks, hailing him, 'let me do the splendacious by you. Mr. Hego, let me interduce a reg'ler brick—fire-brick, in fact—gives sivin pund to the 'ounds, and pays it too.'

'Most praiseworthy character,' observed Ego with a salaam.

'And 'ere's another good cove,' continued Jorrocks, 'Sugar, the grocer. He's a payin' subscriber too, gives ten pund.'

'*Five,*' observed Sugar, whose real name was Smith, with a smile.

'Five, is it?' growled Mr. Jorrocks, adding aloud to himself, 'shalln't interduce you, then. Yon chap trottin' along as if his wite choker wouldn't let him look either to the right or the left, is the Reverend Titus Cramcub, a learned man like yourself—reads Lord Bacon's works, and eats fat bacon for breakfast. He teaches the young idea 'ow to shoot, but prefers 'unting himself, and as soon as 'ounds 'ave shaken off the crowd, and settled to a run, he drops into the front rank, and goes as if he couldn't 'elp himself. This is not a bad chap,' continued Mr. Jorrocks, nodding towards a square-built man in white moleskin breeches, an olive-coloured coat, and boots to match, who now turned a well-

shaped gray upon the heath. 'This is not a bad chap, Haimes the saddler, and I'll tell ye a story 'bout him that may come into your palarvarment, if you like. His trade lies a good deal 'mong the saints, who wouldn't 'prove of his 'unting, so he always christens his 'oss Business, and when any on 'em call when he's out, his foreman says his master's away on "business" *haw, haw, haw! he, he, he!*'—a chuckle in which the great journalist joined. 'This is a shabby screw,' said Mr. Jorrocks, pointing to a man in a rusty Bath-bricky scarlet, riding a badly-clipped ewe-necked dun. 'He's 'unted all his life, they say, and never given a copper to 'ounds, always declarin' that each season was to be his last. And, by the way, reminds me,' continued Mr. Jorrocks, turning short on his secretary, ''ow do the chaps buck up now that they've got wot they want in the way of an 'untsman?'

'Why, only very middling, I'm sorry to say, Sir,' replied Mr. Fleeceall. 'Somehow or other, I never can find a man with any money in his

pocket. It 's always, "Oh, I'll pay you next time we meet," or "I s'pose you'll be out on Monday, when I will bring my subscription,"—but the happy day never comes.'

'Well, but that's all nonsense,' ejaculated Mr. Jorrocks, 'that's all nonsense. Won't do in a commercial country like this, at least only for landowners, and folks wot don't understand 'ow money makes money. I'll tell ye wot ye must do,' continued Mr. Jorrocks, 'I'll tell ye wot you must do,' repeated he, boiling up, 'you must get a set of hinterest tables, and charge every man Jack on 'em five per cent. from the day the subscription becomes due.'

'Well, Sir, what you think right,' replied Mr. Fleeceall.

'Well, I thinks that right,' retorted Mr Jorrocks, adding: 'if I was to get over the [illegible] wi' Bullock and Ulker, d' ye s'pose they would charge me five per cent., or may be ten. They'd be werry unlike bankers in general if they didn't. Why should I give tick wi' t' [illegible]ounds

not. Sir; certainly not,' replied Fleecealf. 'The misfortin is, that every man thinks what he owns is of no importance. Now, there's Mr. Gillyflower coming up as though the county was all his own,' pointing to a stylish young gentleman cantering along on a white cover hack, attired in a new and span new scarlet coat, with patent leather fisherman boots coming half up his thighs, and puffing large clouds of smoke as he went; 'he is down for twenty guineas, and I carn't get a halfpenny of it.' Just then Mr. Gillyflower spying the master as he cantered along, pulled short up, and taking his cigar from his lips, accosted Mr. Jorrocks with—

'Holloa! good-morning—how are ye, old boy?'

Mr. Jorrocks deigned no answer.

'Here's a fine hunting morning, Mr. Jorrocks,' he continued in a somewhat subdued tone, seeing our distinguished stranger.

'A werry *bad* 'untin' mornin', I should say,' replied Mr. Jorrocks, looking very irate, and

unconsciously spurring his horse, who was still fidgeting about, from the effects of the ginger.

'A good scenting one, at all events, I should think,' resumed the youngster, looking rather disconcerted.

'A werry *bad* scentin' one, I should say,' rejoined Mr. Jorrocks, ramming the spurs into his horse, which the animal acknowledged by a sudden and desperate kick, which fairly shot our master over its head.

Great was the consternation! Ego, Fleeceall, Gillyflower, Barnington, Dis arter six, Two upon ten, and half-a-dozen more, all leaped off their horses at once, while Gillyflower caught the hat and wig, and was loud in his hopes that Jorrocks wasn't hurt.

'*Hurt!*' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, his eyes sparkling with rage, as he scrambled up and replaced his lost head-gear, '*hurt*, Sir,' he repeated, looking as though he would eat him, '*no, Sir—not at all—rather the contrary!*'

Our hero, however, having fallen both clean

and soft, and having vented his anger upon his non-paying subscriber, things soon resumed their right course, while Pigg turned the accident to account by sending Ben about with the insurance tickets, singing out 'Take your tickets, gent! please take your tickets! goin' into a *hawful* country—bottomless brooks! Old 'un got brandy in his bottle! Reg'lar cut-'em-down-and-'ang-'em-up-to-dry country!'

This traffic was in turn interrupted by an extraordinary Hyena-looking cap and scarlet-coated youth, with a cane-coloured beard and moustache, cantering furiously about on a long-tailed, cream-coloured hack, dashing at every group of grooms and dark-coated horsemen, with the inquiry—'*Have you seen my fellow? Have you seen my fellow?*' At last he made for the pack, and hazarding the same inquiry of Pigg, that distinguished observer, after a careful though somewhat impertinent scrutiny, exclaimed:

'*N—o—r, ar'm d—d if iver ar did!*' and Mr. Jorrocks, seeing the stranger arranging his whip

as if for action, and knowing Pigg's pugnacious disposition, immediately gave the signal for throwing off, and in an instant the glad pack were frolicking over the greensward of the heath, with the now contracting crowd pressing on after them.

A hat is waved near the windmill on the rising ground. Page 177

CHAPTER IX

THE POMPONIUS EGO DAY—*continued*

SOUTH GROVE, as our readers may remember, was the scene of Mr. Jorrocks's former bag-fox exploit, and was well adapted for such experiments. It was a long wood of stately oaks, running parallel with the Appledove Road, for about a mile, the wood widening into something like twelve acres towards the middle. The other side was bounded by Bumpmead Heath, and the country around was of that undulating nature, that requires a man to ride close with hounds, or run a chance of losing them. From South Grove to Doitwich, the nearest cover, was four miles, as the crow flies, but a judicious winding of certain irregularities of surface would not only lengthen it into five or six miles, but

also draw a bottomless brook twice into the run. Another great advantage it possessed for Mr. Jorrocks was, that sundry bridle-roads all made for the next cover, and yet each by itself appearing to lead in a different direction, no one who did not know them would think of following him.

'But where's Mr. Hego?' inquired he, looking round, expecting to find him at his elbow.

'O, he's just trotted back to the Cock-and-Bottle,' replied Mr. Fleeceall, 'he will be here directly.'

'Wot can he want at the Cock-and-Bottle?' inquired Mr. Jorrocks. 'He doesn't need any more jumpin' powder than he has in his pocket, surely!'

'No,' replied Mr. Fleeceall, 'but in looking into his silver sandwich-box just now, he found they had not put any mustard between the beef and bread, and he can't eat it that way he says. He will be back directly, I dare say—yonder he comes, indeed!'

'Then let's be doin', Pigg!' exclaimed Mr.

Jorrocks, as Ego neared them; adding, 'Now, Binjimin, *mind your eye!* Marmeylad, you know!'

'*Gently*, hounds!' roared Pigg, as they approached the cover, and wanted to dash at the spot they took the scent up on the former occasion. '*Have a care*, all on ye!' added he, with a crack of his whip, as they reached the hedge.

'*Yooi, over in then!*' cheered Pigg, cap in hand, seeing they were bent upon breaking away. '*Yooi, over in!*' and every hound dashes into cover, with rather more music than strict etiquette would allow.

'*Beautiful!*' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, fist side, hoping Ego might not hear the riot. 'Unkimmun heager certain*lie*. Now, Mr. Hego, look out for the find. They'll drag up to him with all this rind, or whatever you call the stuff,' knocking some of it off the bushes with his whip. '*Have at him* there, Manager, old man! Undeniable 'ound that,' turning to Ego, and

pointing out a black-and-tan dog; 'ven he begins to speak, you may look arter your silver sandwich-box,—haw! haw! haw!'

'*Hoic in! hoic in!*' cheered Pigg along the ride, chuckling at the trick he was going to play. 'Have at him, Crowner! good dog! Yooi! wind him, Lousey!' (Louisa) 'good bitch! Have at him there, all on ye, and mind skeulmaister's lookin',' turning to Pomponius Ego with a grin, and saying, 'Bain't that *industry?*'

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'*Tally-ho! tally-ho! tally-ho!*' screamed Ben, from the thickest part of the cover, as though he were getting murdered.

'*Hoic, holloa! hoic, holloa! hoic, holloa!*' exclaimed Ego, in the most orthodox style.

'*A, how-way, canny man! how-way!*' roared Pigg, gathering up his reins and ramming his spurs into his horse. '*How-way, ar say!* dinna stand blairin' there! Whativer ye de, keep the tambourine a roulin'.'

Away tore Pigg to the holloa, through bogs,

briars, bushes, and brambles, followed by Ego; and now the full music of the pack proclaims the finding of the drag. There is a tremendous scent, for though it has lain an hour it is strong enough to last a week. Round they go, full swing, every hound throwing his tongue, and making the old wood echo with their melody.

'They'll kill him in cover,' observed Ego, taking out his watch. 'Beckford's wrong about scent never lying with a white frost. I'll write an article to prove it.' A momentary check ensues—the drag has been lifted.

'Killed for a crown!' exclaimed Ego with delight.

'Niver sick a thing;—niver sick a thing!' retorts Pigg with a grin.

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Now they are on him again, and the old oaks seem to shake with the melody.

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'Is he a big 'un, Ben?' asked Pigg, as they meet at the junction of the rides.

'*Uncommon!*' exclaims Benjamin, gasping for breath.

'Aye, but we'll bucket him,' responded Pigg, turning his quid in his mouth; adding, 'ar'll be the death of a shillin', ony how! Sink it!' added he, 'brandy and baccy 'ill gar a man live for iver!'

It's now near leaving time, and Mr. Jorrocks and the field come up in long-drawn file, the worthy M.F.H. all excitement and agitation.

'Oh!' exclaims he, dropping his ponderous whip down his leg with a heavy crash, 'if we do but manish it, 'ow 'appy I shall be! My vig, they're away!'

Affable and Mercury top the fence out of cover, and the whole pack follow with desperate velocity. One twang of his horn is all Pigg gives, and then sticking it into his boot, he gets out of cover, hustles his horse, and settles himself into his seat. Away they go, up a long grass field by the side of the cover, scent breast high, the pack running almost mute, and the slow ones beginning to tail.

Pomponius Ego having got a good start, begins to spur, and passes Pigg in his stride, singing out:

'When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug-of-war!'

A stiff fence, with a strongly made-up gap, brings him up short, and turning to Pigg, he holloas out:

'I'll hold your horse if you'll pull it down!'

'*As soon gets off!*' replied James, flying over the fence.

A gap at the end by the wood lets Ego through, and away he strides after Pigg, as hard as ever his horse can lay legs to the ground. Three or four more large enclosures are sped over without any change of position, the hounds going best pace all the time.

'Sink him, but he's made it o'er strang!' exclaimed Pigg to himself, thinking of the drag; 'ar wish they main't beat us,' looking at the hounds running away from them.

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A hat held against the clear blue sky proclaims the line over the hill.

'That 's the way, on him,' exclaims Pigg, pointing to the holloa.

'Curse the fellow!' replies Ego, 'he 'll have headed him to a certainty,' inwardly rejoicing at the thoughts of a check.

On they go, at a pace truly awful. The drag has never been lifted till within a few yards of the holloa on the hill, and the rising ground tells on the heaving horses. Now they have a check, and on ploughed land, too. The hounds dash towards the fence beyond, and swing their cast without a whimper.

Pigg sits like a statue, giving his horse the wind, his eagle eye fixed upon the pack. They throw up; and now he takes out his horn, gives one blast, and in an instant the pack are with him.

'I 'll lay my life he 's headed back!' exclaims Ego. 'That confounded fool on the hill did all the mischief. Do for once try back, as Beckford says.'

'Look out of the winder, James, and see wot' un night it is.' *Page* 186

'Forroard yonder, to the left of the harrow,' whispers a confidant to James Pigg, 'then along the bottom of the next grass field, and straight over Ulverstone Pasture and Bysplit, to the back of the red house yonder.'

'That can *never* be the line!' exclaims Ego, wiping the perspiration from his brow. 'None but a born idiot would make such a cast—in the very teeth of the wind, too!'

'How-way, canny man! How-way!' exclaims Pigg, waving his arm and pointing to Priestess, hitting off the scent; '*how-way,* ar say; what! hast getten *ne mair ink & pen!*'

Away they go, at best pace as before, but a lane at the bottom of a turnip-field, a mile or two farther on, again brings them up.

This check joins heads and tails. Mr. Jorrocks, who has come pounding along, in a state of desperate perspiring excitement, all eyes, ears, and fears, through his pet line of gates, jumps with his man at the point in the lane where the drag has crossed. Both are in such a

stew, that Jorrocks can only articulate, 'Headies! 'ow they go!' and Pigg, all anxiety to get his hounds across before the tail comes up, exclaims, '*Had bye, ard man! Sink! ar'll be dingin on ye down!*' adding, '*ye've* ne carle to ride for reputation!' The tobacco-juice streams down either side of his chin, and his lank hair floats on the breeze as, bare-headed, he caps the hounds over into the field. They are now upon grass again. The scent lies parallel with the lane, and Mr. Jorrocks, whose horse and whose self are nearly pumped out, keeps on the hard road, followed by a heterogeneous tail of mud-stained, elbowing horsemen. The aspirants for fame stick to the hounds, and follow them into every field, Cramcub, who cast up as the hounds broke cover, leading.

Nothing can be finer than the line! Large grazing grounds, some forty, none less than twenty acres, are sped over, and twice Dribbleford Brook comes in the way for those whose ambition is waterproof. What a scene!—what blobbings in

and scramblings out! what leavings of hind legs and divings for whips, sticks, and cigar-cases!

Jorrocks, who is well laid in on the road for a view, screeches and holloas them on. 'Now, Sugar! now Slates! now Dis arter six!' Then up came Whezey, junior, looking very like 'enough.' 'Hover ye go!' roars our master, cracking his ponderous whip. 'O, Mr. Jorrocks! (puff) I must enter a (pant) *nolle prosequi*,' gasps the exhausted lawyer. 'Enter it then,' exclaims our master, delighted at the symptoms of distress, and saying to himself, 'If this don't 'stonish old Hego, there arn't no halligators! Come hup, you hugly beast,' he adds to his horse, again spurring and kicking him into a canter.

The hounds bend again to the right, the stain of cattle rather slackens their pace, and some heavy sticky fallows at length bring their noses to the ground. ''Eavens be praised!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, easing his horse, and eyeing them topping the fence between the

pasture and arable land: 'we may now have a little breathin' time, and see if they can 'unt as well as run. Oh, the beauties, 'ow they spread! one, two, three, and now all together—oh! beautiful! beautiful! He 's up the furrow. Where 's Hego!'

And echo answered 'Where?'

Mr. Jorrocks is right. The mock 'thief o' the world' has gone up the wet furrow, to the injury of the firm of Herring and Aniseed, who carry on business very languidly. Old Priestess's unerring nose alone keeps the pack on the line. Pigg, however, is at hand, with a good idea of the run of his fox, and now carries away a rood of fence as he crashes into the field to his hounds. His horse's neck begins to stiffen, and there have been one or two ominous throat-rattles, but Pigg hustles him along, and casts his hounds forward to Sywell Wood. What a crash! The feeble whimper that barely owned the scent is changed into a full and melodious chorus; every hound throws his tongue, and

echo answers them a hundred-fold! *There's a rare scent!*

The cover being open at the bottom, the hounds are quickly through, and Pigg, catching Benjamin at the far end, pulls him off his horse, and makes a fresh start on the boy's.

Grass again greets the pack. The red-topped house is neared, and the scent improves. The hounds run stout, though, perhaps, not carrying quite so good a head as might have been desirable, had Ego been near. On they go; and now a sudden check ensues at the corner of the stackyard. The music that lately rent the air is lulled, the hounds having swung a rocket-like cast, stand staring with their heads in the air.

'*Who-hoop, gone to ground*' exclaims some one in the rear, anxious for a termination of the enjoyment.

'*Not a bit of it,*' replies Mr. Jorrocks, knowing better. '"OLD 'ARD!" roars he to the forward roadsters, who are now getting among the hounds.

'You 'air-dresser on the chestnut 'oss!' holloaing to a gentleman with very big ginger whiskers; 'PRAY 'OLD 'ARD!'

'HAIR-DRESSER!' exclaims the gentleman, in a fury, turning short round; '*I'm an officer in the ninety-first regiment!*'

'Then you hossifer in the ninety-fust regiment, wot looks like an 'air-dresser, 'old 'ard,' replied Mr. Jorrocks, trotting on, adding most unconcernedly, '*Cast 'em forrard, Pigg! Cast 'em forrard!* or make a patent all round my hatter.'

On goes Pigg, making good the line the warmint should have gone. Not a hound speaks! —all mute as death.

'*Werry rum, Pigg,*' said Mr. Jorrocks, winking significantly to his huntsman, as the latter trotted round with his hounds; 'werry rum—for once cast back—clear the way there, gen'lemen, if you please, clear the way, who knows but you are right upon the line o' scent!' cried Mr. Jorrocks to the horsemen who were clustering about, thinking of anything but what they ought.

That would not do.

'Oh dear! oh dear! that's bad,' muttered Mr. Jorrocks to James Pigg; 'where the deuce can the fool ha' gone?'

We may here state that Giles Gosling the farmer, having seen Pigg and his comrade setting out the line, and not exactly relishing their progress over his wheat a little farther on, had watched Maltby's coming, and seizing him, drag and all, had stowed him away in his cellar.

'Ar mun just try to cross the line on him,' observed Pigg, pulling his horn out of his boot, and giving it a twang; 'put hunds forrard 'ard, man,' said he to his master, trotting on, and blowing as he went.

'Who ever saw such a cast?' exclaimed Ego, who had now got draggled up; 'your huntsman must be mad, Mr. Jorrocks!'

'I'll lay a guinea 'at to a 'alf-crown wide-awake he recovers his fox for all that,' replied Mr. Jorrocks, with a good deal more confidence than he felt.

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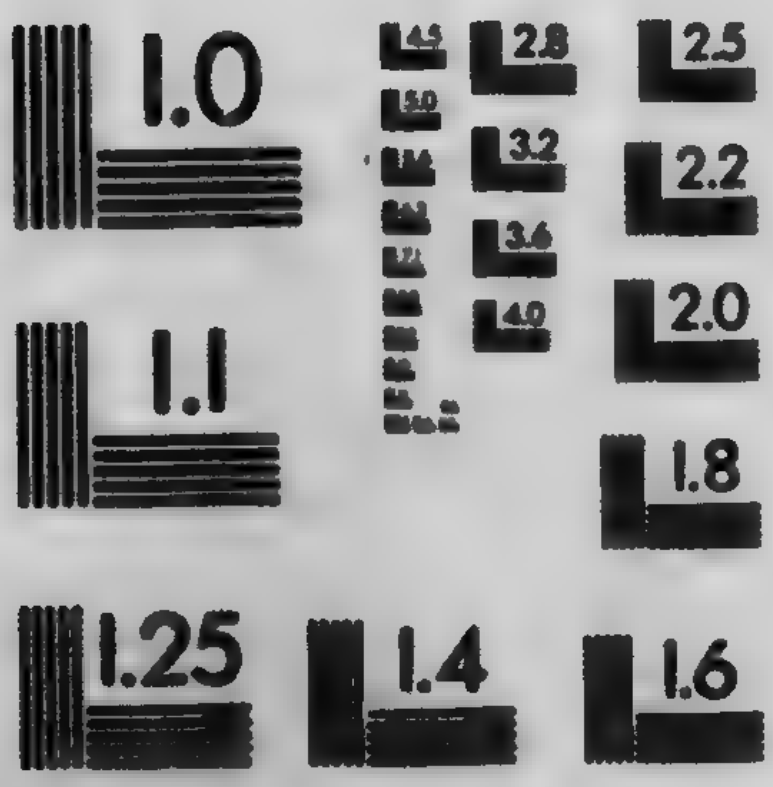

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'If he does I'll eat him!' rejoined Pomponius Ego, with an air of importance.

This prediction, coming from so high an authority, combined with the state of the steam, had the effect of stopping the majority of a pretty well exhausted field, who all clustered round Ego to relate their daring leaps, in hopes of monthly immortality. 'I leapt Dribbleford Brook.' 'I charged the ox-fence on the far side.' 'I never left the hounds.' 'I did this—I did that!' Ambitious men!

With fear and anxiety on their faces, Pigg and his master bumped on, in hopes of hitting off the scent. Mr. Jorrocks was in a desperate stew.

'Oh, Pigg!' exclaimed he, as they got out of hearing, 'I'd give the world to finish wi' blood. If you could but manish to kill him, 'ow gratefully obleged I should be to you and your heirs for ever! You shall drink brandy out of a pint-pot for breakfast, dinner, and supper!'

'Ye said a *quart!*' observed the man of the north, eyeing his hounds.

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Jorrocks.—'Did I? I'll be as good as my word.'

Pigg.—'Ords wuns, ard man, fetch hunds on; does think, thou ard gouk, ar can hit him off o' mysel'?' looking back at the hounds all straggling behind Mr. Jorrocks's horse.

Mr. Jorrocks pockets the rebuke, and bestirs himself to get the hounds on to his huntsman; Pigg trots on, letting them feel for the scent as they go.

Mr. Jorrocks bumps on, vowing all sorts of vows to Diana, if she will only 'ave the kindness to assist him that once. He would give her a hat and feather! He would give her a swan's-down muff and tippet! Nay, he would stand a whole rig-out at Swan and Hedgar's; pettikits, bustle, and all!

Pigg's eagle-eye lights up, as a hat is waved near the windmill on the rising ground.

'Yonder he is!' exclaims James, grinning with delight.

'Vere?' inquires Mr. Jorrocks, all eyes, like Gabriel Junks's tail.

Pigg spurs his horse, and trots on to the holloa.

It *is* the man, who has been waiting in anxious expectation, and has just shook the fox.

After staring about, Reynard proceeds from a crawl to a trot, and then sets his head for the vale, from which the hounds have just come.

Pigg views him stealing past a plantation end, and lays his hounds quietly on; they quickly take up the scent.

A stranger in the land, the fox goes stoutly down wind, with the hounds too near to give him much chance for his life. As if anxious for the promotion of the sport, he makes for the vale, and the pack come swinging down the hill in the view of the field planted below. Fresh ardour is caught at the sight! Those who ridiculed the cast are now loudest in its praise. They reach the bottom, and fox and hounds are in the same field. Now they view him! How they strain! It's a beautiful sight. Old Priestess is tailed off, and Rummager falls into the rear.

Ah, age! age! Now Vanquisher turns him, and races with Dexterous for the seize! Who-hoop! Fox and hounds roll over together!

Now Pigg crushes through the Bullfinch at the far end, followed by Mr. Jorrocks, who doesn't even ask 'What there 's on t' other side?' Master and man race for the brush, but Pigg throws himself from his horse, and has the fox high in air just as the field come up in the opposite direction. What delight is in every countenance! There is Pigg holding the fox above his head, grinning and gaping, with his cap on one side, his white neckcloth ends flying out, and a coat-lap torn to ribands. Mr. Jorrocks gets off his horse, and throwing his hat in air, catches it again, and then kicks the crown out, while his heaving horse stretches and shakes himself after his unwonted exertion. Lather! lather! lots of lather! Even dribbling Ben catches the infection, and whoops and holloas at the top of his voice.

Up comes Ego, and Mr. Jorrocks, with brush

in one hand and crownless hat in the other, greets him on one leg, waving the proud trophy about, and hurraying at the top of his voice, '*Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!* Allow me, Mr. Pomponius Hego,' says he, 'to present you with the brush of the werry gamest old thief o' the world whatever was seen. Time, one hour and twenty minutes, with only one check—distance, wot you please to call it. Am sorry you weren't hup to see the darlin's run into the warmint! Did it in style!

'Never were sich a pack as mine; best 'ounds in England!—best 'ounds in Europe!—best 'ounds in Europe, Hasia, Hafrica, or 'Merica!' So saying, Mr. Jorrocks, resuming his equilibrium, presented Ego with the brush, who received it with laudable condescension.

'Now, vot will you do?' inquired Mr. Jorrocks; 'eat your sandwiches and find another fox, or eat your sandwiches and cut away 'ome?'

'Why, for my part, I should like to try again,' replied Ego; 'but I fear your horse's condition

is hardly equal to another burst; added to which, there's a frost in the air that will harden the ground, and, perhaps, damage your hounds' feet. I think, perhaps, we had better leave well alone.'

'So be it,' replied Mr. Jorrocks. 'Here, then, you chap with the bandy legs!' calling to a knock-kneed lad on the other side of the ring; 'fatch me my 'at-crown, the cold strikes through my cocoa-nut.' Having got it, Mr. Jorrocks stuck the crown in in the best way he could, and, remounting his horse, returned to Handley Cross in state, and great exultation.

CHAPTER X

THE PROPHET GABRIEL

'THAT was Gabriel Junks!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, rising from his seat, and rushing to the window.

Sure enough it was Gabriel Junks; and after a short pause, another scream, more shrill and piercing, confirmed Mr. Jorrocks's surmise. Seizing his hat he rushed into the garden.

It was a misty sort of morning, and the sun was labouring through the flitting clouds that obscured its brightness. The wind, too, had got into the south, and there was a fresh, growing feeling in the air that spoke of spring and returning vegetation. The peacock again screamed, and sought the shelter of a laurel.

'As sure as my name's John Jorrocks, there's goin' to be rain,' observed our worthy master, scrutinising the bird. 'As sure as my name's John Jorrocks, there's goin' to be rain,' repeated he. '*Pe-pe-pe-pe-pe-pe!*' exclaimed he, scraping the crumbs from the bottom of his pockets and throwing them to his prophet.

Gabriel Junks rushed from his retreat, and having picked up the crumbs, stood eyeing Mr. Jorrocks with a head-on-one-side sort of leer, which he at length broke off by another loud scream, and then a rattling spread of his tail. Mr. Jorrocks and the bird were thus standing *vis-à-vis* when James Pigg made his appearance.

'I'll lay a guinea 'at to a 'alf-crown gossamer, there's goin' to be rain,' said Mr. Jorrocks to his huntsman, pointing to the bird.

'Deil bon me if ar care,' replied Pigg; 'ar hasn't gettin ne seeds, nor nothin'—maybe Deavilbogers wad like a sup,' his mind harking back to 'canny Newcassel.'

'Well, but, don't ye see, if it rains we can have an 'unt,' said Mr. Jorrocks, astonished at his huntsman's stupidity.

'*Se we can!*' exclaimed Pigg, all alive; 'dash it! ar niver thought o' that now—another bye-day—sick a one as the first—ay?'

'Vy, no—not exactly,' said Mr. Jorrocks, not relishing an entire repetition; 'but s'pose we have another turn at the old customer—go out early, and drag up to the warmint, find him when he's full—maybe a cock, or a hen, or a Gabriel Junks aboard,' looking at the bird still strutting about with his tail spread.

'Sink it, aye!' said Pigg; 'let's gan i' the morn.'

Mr. Jorrocks.—'If it comes wet we will. We can feed th' 'ounds at all ewents, and be ready for a start.'

. . . . . .

The day continued hazy, but still no rain fell. Junks, however, persisted in his admonitions, and Mr. Jorrocks felt so certain it would

The death of 'the old customer.' Page 203

rain. that he had Pigg into the parlour in the evening to make arrangements for the morning. Mrs. Jorrocks, Belinda, and Stobbs had gone out to tea, and Mr. Jorrocks was left all alone.

Master and man had an anxious confabulation. Mr. Jorrocks was all for Pinch-me-near, while Pigg recommended Hew-timber Forest.

Of course Jorrocks carried his point.

About nine Betsy brought the supper-tray, and Jorrocks would treat Pigg to a glass of brandy-and-water. One glass led to another, and they had a strong talk about hunting. They drank each other's healths, then the hea s of the hounds.

'I'll give you old Priestess's good 'ealth!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, holding up his glass. 'Fine old betch, with her tan eye-brows—thinks I never saw a better 'ound—wise as a Christian!' Pigg proposed Manager. Mr. Jorrocks gave Ravager. Pigg gave Lavender; and they drank Mercury, and Affable, and Crowner, and Lousey, and

Mountebank, and Milliner—almost all the pack, in short, each in turn being best. A, what a dog one was to find a fox. A, what a dog another was to drive a scent.

The fire began to hiss, and Mr. Jorrocks felt confident his prophecy was about to be fulfilled. 'Look out of the winder, James, and see wot'un a night it is,' said he to Pigg, giving the log a stir, to ascertain that the hiss didn't proceed from any dampness in the wood.

James staggered up, and after a momentary grope about the room—for they were sitting without candles—exclaimed, 'Hellish dark, and smells of cheese!'

'*Smells o' cheese!*' repeated Mr. Jorrocks, looking round in astonishment; '*smells o' cheese!*—vy, man, you've got your nob i' the cupboard—this be the vinder,' continued he, rising and opening some shutters painted like the cupboard door in the other corner. Mr. Jorrocks undid the fastening and threw up the sash.

The night was dark—black as pitch—not a

star was visible, and a soft warm rain was just beginning to fall.

'*Didn't I tell you so?*' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, drawing in his hand, and giving his thigh a hearty slap; 'didn't I tell you so?' repeated he, 'I was *certain* it was agoin' to rain, that Gabriel Junks was never wrong!—Is better than all your wanes, and weathercocks, and Aneroid glasses wot ever were foaled. We'll drink his 'ealth in a bumper!' So saying, Mr. Jorrocks and Pigg replenished their glasses, and drank to 'the health of Gabriel Junks.'

Pigg then would treat his master to a song—a song about ard Squier Lambton and his hunds: so, ejecting his quid and filling a bumper, he chaunted the following, our master chiming in, and substituting the name of Jorrocks for that of Lambton in the chorus:—

[1] 'Though midnight her dark frowning mantle is spreading,
Yet time flies unheeded where Bacchus resides;
Fill, fill then your glasses, his power ne'er dreading,
And drink to the hounds o'er which Lambton presides.

[1] Tune—'Weave a Garland.'

Though toast after toast with great glee has been given,
The highest top-sparkling bumper decides,
That for stoutness, pace, beauty, on this side of Heaven,
Unrivalled the hounds o'er which Lambton presides!
Then drink to the foxhounds,
The high mettled foxhounds,
We 'll drink to the hounds o'er which Lambton presides.

'Let Uckerby boast of the feats of the Raby,
And Ravenscar tell what the Hurworth have done,
But the wide-spreading pastures of Sadberge can swear to
The brushes our fleet pack of foxhounds have won.
Then that Sedgefield, *our country*, all countries outvies, sir,
The highest top-sparkling bumper decides,
That we 've foxes can fly, sir, or sinking must die, sir,
When pressed by the hounds o'er which Lambton presides.
Then drink, etc.

'Of their heart-bursting "flys" let the Leicestershire tell us,
Their plains, their ox fences, and that sort of stuff.
But give me a day with the Sedgefield brave fellows,
When horses ne'er flinch, nor men cry, hold, enough.
Whilst the blood of old Cæsar our foxes can boast, sir,
May Lambton their only dread enemy be,
And the green waving whins of our covers my toast, sir.
Oh! the hounds and the blood of old Lambton for me.
Then drink, etc.'

And Jorrocks did drink, and did whoop, and

did holloa, and did shout, till he made himself hoarse. His spirits, or the brandy spirits, seemed to have fairly run away with him. At length he began to cool down and think of the morrow.

'Now you and I 'll have an 'unt,' observed Mr. Jorrocks.

'Squier Stobbs 'll gan te, ar 's warn'd,' observed Pigg.

'Oh, never mind him,' replied Jorrocks, with a chuck of the chin, 'never mind him; no sayin' when he may be 'ome—gone fiddlin' out with the women.'

'He 's aye ticklin' the lasses' hocks,' observed Pigg.

'You and I, at all ewents, will have an 'unt, and see if we can't pivy that tormentin' old customer. Never was sich a fox in this world. Do believe he 'll be the death o' me, if I don't finish him.—Shall never get through the summer, for thinkin' on 'im. So now we 'll start at six—or call it 'alf-past five, and see if we can't do the trick afore breakfast. My vig! if we do, wot a blow-out

we 'll have—you shall have a gallon of XX, and a werry big-bottled gooseberry-tart for your breakfast.'

'Ar 'd raythe have a ham-collop,' replied Pigg, replenishing his mouth with tobacco.

'So you shall,' rejoined Mr. Jorrocks; 'and poached heggs into the bargain.'

The other arrangements were soon made—and the brandy being finished, master and man separated for the night.

CHAPTER XI

ANOTHER LAST DAY

PIGG having curled himself up in his clothes on the kitchen-table, awoke with the first peep of day. He was at the stables betimes, and dressed and fed the horses himself. Mr. Jorrocks was equally early, having been greatly tormented by the old customer, who had appeared to him in his dreams in a variety of ways —now running between his legs and upsetting him, now nearly blinding him with a whisk over his eyes from his sandy brush, again as the chairman of a convivial meeting of foxes who did nothing but laugh and make finger fars to their noses at him, crying, 'Ah, cut his tail! Cut his tail!' and mimicking his holloas and hunting noises; next sitting on a high stool, in his own counting-house, writing a letter to *Bell's Life*

and the *Field*, declaring he was the worst sportsman and greatest humbug that ever got upon a horse; anon, as a bull, with a tremendous fox's brush, charging him, as Gollarfield's bull charged him on the Hardpye Hill day, which ended as usual in our master flooring Mrs. Jorrocks, who vowed she would appeal to Dodson and the court for the protection of injured ribs. Altogether Jorrocks was sadly put out, and was full of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness against the old customer. Charley Stobbs, to whom Pigg had sent word by Betsy, appearing just as our master got down, rather encouraged him to hope for the best, and sent him stamping to the door in better spirits.

It was a lovely morning! Mild and balmy—the rain had ceased, and the sun rose with unclouded brilliancy, drawing forth the lately reluctant leaves, and opening the wild flowers to its earliest rays. The drops hung like diamonds on the bushes, and all nature seemed refreshed.

Walter Fleececall's ominous visage appearing on one side of the gate, and Duncan Nevin's on the other, caused such a sensation, that (to avoid the dust) many of the gentlemen got into the fields, and never came near the gate again. Page 208

'This be more like the thing,' said Mr. Jorrocks, hoisting himself into his saddle with a swag that made old Arterxerxes grunt again; 'if there arn't a scent this mornin', there arn't no hallegators'; with which wise observation he turned his horse towards the kennel.

'Turn 'em all out,' said he to Pigg, adding aloud to himself, 'We 'll 'ave a good cry at all ewents.'

The hounds partook of the general hilarity. Out they rushed with joyous cry, and set the horses capering with their frolicking.

The dry and dusty roads were watered—the hedgerows were filled with the green luxuriance of spring, and the golden poplar stood in bright relief among the dark green pines and yews. If a fox-hunter can welcome spring, such a day would earn his adoration. All nature was alive, but hardly yet had man appeared to greet it. Presently the labourers began to appear at their cottages. The undressed children popped about the doors, cocks crew lustily, the lambs gambolled

about the ewes, and indignant ganders flew at the hounds' and horses' heels.

'Sink them goslin's!' said Pigg, eyeing a whole string of them; 'ar wish fox had ivery one o' you.'

Our friends' frequent visits having made them well acquainted with the way to the valuable forest they popped through gates and gaps, and made short cuts through fields and farms, that greatly reduced the distance they travelled on the first occasion. After a couple of hours' steady butter and eggs bumping, they found themselves on Saddlecombe-hill, overlooking an oak-clad ravine that gradually lost itself in the general sterility of the wide forest. A slight change was just visible on the oak-buds; the young birch had got its plum-coloured tinge, while here and there the spiry larch in verdant green, or the dark spruce or darker fir, broke the massive heaviness of the forest.

Jorrocks pulled up, as well to reconnoitre as to see if he could hit off the smuggler's cave,

which he had never been able to do, though he made as diligent search as the agitation of pursuing the old customer would allow. He now eyed the sun-bright forest far and near, north, south, east and west, but identifying feature he saw none. It might be anywhere.

The hounds presently interrupted the reverie, by setting up the most melodious cry; and our master, awakening to a sense of what he had come out for, proceeded to distribute his forces as he thought best for circumventing the old customer.

'You take the far side, and cross by the crag,' said Mr. Jorrocks to Pigg; 'Charley will keep on this, and ven I hears you twang th' 'orn, I'll throw th' 'ounds into cover'; saying which, Mr. Jorrocks turned short round, and Stobbs assumed the place that Pigg had just occupied in the rear.

. . . . . .

'Dash it, wot a mornin' it is!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, turning up his jolly face, beaming with exultation; 'wot a many delicious moments

one loses by smooterin' i' bed!—dash my vig! if I won't get up at five every mornin' as long as I live! Glad I've got on my cords 'stead o' my shags, for it's goin' to be werry 'ot,' continued he, looking down on a pair of second or third-hand whites. '*Yooi over*, in there!' to the hounds, with a wave of his hand, as Pigg's horn announced he had taken his station.

In the hounds flew, with a chirp and a whimper; and the crack of Pigg's whip on the far side sounded like a gun in the silence around.

'Yooi, spread and try for him, my beauties!' holloaed Mr. Jorrocks, riding into cover among the stunted underwood.

The pack spread, and try in all directions—now here, now there, now whiffing with curious nose round the hollies, and now trying up the rides.

'There's a touch of a fox,' said Mr. Jorrocks to himself, as Priestess put her nose to the ground, and ran mute across the road, lashing

her sides with her stern. A gentle whimper followed, and Mr. Jorrocks cheered her to the echo. 'The warmint's astir,' said he; 'that's jest where we hit on him last time.' Now Priestess speaks again in fuller and deeper notes, and Ravager and Lavender, and the rest of the pack rush to the spot. How beautifully they flourish—eager, and yet none will go an inch without the scent.

'Vell done, old 'ooman! speak to him again!' exclaimed Mr. Jorrocks, delighted to hear the old bitch's tongue; 'a fox for a pund; *ten* if you like!'

. . . . . .

The pack have now got together, and all are busy on the scent. The villain has been astir early, and the drag is rather weak.

'Dash my vig, he's been here,' says Mr. Jorrocks, eyeing some feathers sticking in a bush; 'there's three-and-sixpence at least for an old fat 'en,' wondering whether he would have to pay for it or not.

The hounds strike forward, and getting upon a grassy ride, carry the scent with a good head for some quarter of a mile, to the ecstatic delight of Mr. Jorrocks, who bumps along, listening to their music, and hoping it might never cease.

A check! They've overrun the scent. '*Hie back!*' cries Mr. Jorrocks, turning his horse round; 'gone to the low crags I'll be bund—that's the way he always goes; I'll pop up 'ill, and stare him out o' countenance, if he takes his old line'; saying which, Mr. Jorrocks stuck spurs into Arterxerxes, and, amid the grunts of the horse and the rumbling of the loose stones, succeeded in gaining the rising ground, while the hounds worked along the brook below.

The chorus grows louder! The rocky dell resounds the cry a hundredfold! The tawny owl, scared from his ivied crag, faces the sun in a Bacchanalian sort of flight; wood-pigeons wing their timid way, the magpie is on high, and the jay's grating screech adds wildness to the scene. What a crash! Warm in the woody

dell, half-circled by the winding brook, where rising hills ward off the wintry winds, the old customer had curled himself up to sleep till evening's dusk invited him back to the hen-roost. That outburst of melody proclaims that he is unkennelled before the pack!

Mr. Jorrocks, having gained his point, places himself behind a gnarled and knotted ivy-covered mountain ash, whose hollow trunk tells of ages long gone by, through a hole in which he commands a view of the grass ride towards the rising ground, upon which the 'old customer' generally wends his way. There, as Mr. Jorrocks sat, with anxious eyes and ears, devouring the rich melody, he sees what, at first sight, looked like a hare coming up at a stealthy, stopping, listening sort of pace; but a second glance shows that it is a fox—and not only a fox, but his identical old friend, who has led him so many dances, and whose lightening fur tells of many seasons' wickedness.

Mr. Jorrocks can hardly contain himself, and

but for his old expedient of counting twenty, would infallibly have holloaed.

The fox comes close up, but is so busy with his own affairs, that he has not time to look about; and before Mr. Jorrocks has counted nine, the fox has made a calculation that the hounds are too near for him to break, so he just turns short into the wood before they get a view. Up they come, frantic for blood, and dash into the field, in spite of Mr. Jorrocks's efforts to turn them, who, hat in hand, sweeps towards the line the fox has taken. A momentary check ensues, and the hounds return as if ashamed of their obstinacy. Now they are on him again, and Mr. Jorrocks thrusts his hat upon his brow, runs the fox's tooth of his hat-string through the button-hole of his roomy coat, gathers up his reins, and bustles away outside the cover, in a state of the utmost excitement —half frantic, in fact! There is a tremendous scent, and Reynard is puzzled whether to fly or stay. He tries the opposite side, but Pigg, who

is planted on a hill, heads him, and he is beat off his line.

The hounds gain upon him, and there is nothing left but a bold venture up the middle, so, taking the bed of the brook, he endeavours tc baffle his followers by the water. Now they splash after him, the echoing banks and yew-studded cliffs resounding to their cry. The dell narrows towards the west, and Mr. Jorrocks rides forward to view him away. A countryman yoking his plough is before him, and with hat high in air, 'TALLIHO's' till he's hoarse. Pigg's horn on one side, and Jorrocks's on the other, get the hounds out in a crack; the countryman mounts one of his carters, the other runs away with the plough, and the three sportsmen are as near mad as anything can possibly be. It's ding, dong, hey away pop with them all!

The fallows carry a little, but there's a rare scent, and for two miles of ill-enclosed land Reynard is scarcely a field before the hounds. Now Pigg views him! Now Jorrocks! Now

Charley! Now Pigg again! Thirty couple of hounds lengthen as they go, but there is no Pomponius Ego to tell. The fox falls back at a wall, and the hounds are in the same field. He tries again—now he's over! The hounds follow, and dash forward, but the fox has turned short up the inside of the wall, and gains a momentary respite. Now they are on him again! They view him through the gateway beyond: he rolls as he goes! Another moment, and they pull him down in the middle of a large grass field!

'*Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!*' exclaims Mr. Jorrocks, rolling off his horse, and diving into the middle of the pack, and snatching the fox, which old Thunderer resents by seizing him behind, and tearing his white cords half-way down his legs. '*Hooray!*' repeats he, kicking out behind, and holding the fox over his head, his linen flying out, and his enthusiastic old face all beaming with joy.

'Oh dear! oh dear!' exclaims he, dancing

about with it over his head; 'if ever there was a warmint properly dusted it 's you,' looking the fox full in the face; 'you've been a hugly customer to me, dash my vig if you haven't'; and thereupon Mr. Jorrocks resumed his capers singing:

'Unrivalled the 'ounds o'er which Jorrocks presides!
Then drink to the fox-'ounds,
The 'igh-mettled fox-'ounds,
We 'll drink to the 'ounds o'er which Jorrocks presides.'

'Sink ar's left mar Jack-a-legs ahint,' says Pigg, wanting to cut off the fox's brush. 'Has ony on ye getten a knife?'

The cart-horsed countryman has one, and Jorrocks holds the fox, while Pigg performs the last rites of the chase.

With whoops and holloas Jorrocks throws the carcass high in air, which, falling among the baying pack, is torn to pieces in a minute.

Joy, delightful joy, is theirs, clouded by but one reflection—that that *was* the last day of the season.

They re-enter Handley Cross by half-past nine, and at ten sit down to breakfast, Pigg getting such a tuck-out as he hadn't had since he left his 'coosin Deavilbogers'.'

CHAPTER XII

THE WANING SEASON

THE season was wearing out apace.

An unusually dry spring brought the country forward, and set the farmers to their fences and their fields. Ploughs and harrows were going, grain was scattering, and Reynard was telegraphed wherever he went.

'You bain't a comin' this way again, I s'pose,' observed each hedger, as he drove his stakes into the ground to stop up the gaps.

The hazel-drops began to hang from the bushes, the larch assumed a greenish tint, and the groves echoed to the sound of minstrelsy. The wood-pigeons had long been exhorting Davy to take two cows, when he was about it—

'Take two coos, Davy,
Take two coos,'

as some ingenious gentleman has interpreted their mild melody. The rooks, indeed all the birds, were busy—primroses opened their yellow leaves, and the wood anemone shot into life and wild luxuriance. The broom was parched and the gorse sun-burnt.

After many days of declining sport, including two or three after the old customer, the following ominous paragraph at length appeared in the *Paul Pry*, under the head of

'HUNTING INTELLIGENCE.

'Mr. Jorrocks's hounds will meet at Furzy Lawn Turnpike, on Wednesday, at nine o'clock precisely.' Significant notice! Another 'last day' about to be added to the long list of 'last days' that had gone before. The old-stagers sighed as they read it. It recalled many such notices read in company with those they would never see again. The young ones said it was a 'pity,' but consoled themselves with the thoughts of a summer in London, a yachting or a fishing season. The would-be sportsmen who had been

putting off hunting all the winter began to think seriously of taking to it next, and to make arrangements for November.

The morning of the last day was anything but propitious. The sun shone clear and bright, while a cutting east wind starved the sheltered side of the face—horses' coats stared, the hounds looked listless and ill, and men's boots carried dust instead of mud-sparks. Fitful gusts of wind hurried the dust along the roads, or raised it in eddying volleys on hills and exposed places. It felt like anything but hunting; the fallows were dry and parched, the buds on the trees looked as if they thought they had better retire, and all nature yearned for rain—rain would be a real blessing.

Still there was a goodish muster of pinks, and the meet being on the road, sundry flys and other sporting equipages contributed their quota of dust. Great was the moaning and lamentation that the season was over. Men didn't know what they should do with them-

selves all the summer. What wild resolutions they might have pledged themselves to is uncertain, for just as the drawing up of vehicles, the cuttings in and out of horsemen, the raising of hats, the kissing of hands, and the volleys of dust, were at their height, Walter Fleeceall's ominous visage appearing on one side of the gate, and Duncan Nevin's on the other, caused such a sensation, that (to avoid the dust) many of the gentlemen got into the fields, and never came near the gate again. Added to this a great black cart stallion, with his tail full of red tape, whinnied and kicked up such a row, that people could hardly hear themselves speak.

At nine o'clock, half blinded, half baked, and quite bothered, Mr. Jorrocks gave the signal for leaving the meet. It was a wildish sort of try, and every farmer having recently seen a fox at some distance from his own farm, James Pigg just run the hounds through turnip-fields, along dike-backs as he called the hedgerows, and through any little spinneys that came in his

way, till he got them to Bleberry Gorse. What a change had come over the hounds since last they were there! Instead of the eager dash in, they trotted up to it, and not above half the hounds could be persuaded to enter.

'*Eleu in, mar cannie hinnies!*' holloaed James Pigg, standing erect in his stirrups and waving his cap; but the 'cannie hinnies' didn't seem to care about it, and stood looking him in the face, as much as to say so. 'Hoic in there, Priestess! Hoic in!' continued he, trotting round the cover, and holding them at the weak places, in hopes of striking a scent. 'Ne fox here,' said Pigg to himself, watching the waving of the gorse as the hounds worked leisurely through it. 'Ne great odds, either,' continued he; 'could mak nout on him if there was.'

. . . . . .

'Where will you go to next, James?' inquired Mr. Jorrocks, coming up, horn in hand, preparing to call his hounds out of cover.

'A! ar dinna ken, ar's sure,' replied Pigg;

'mak's little odds ar think—might as well hunt o'er a pit-heap, as i' seck a country as this,' looking at the baked fallows round about.

'Well, never mind,' replied Mr. Jorrocks, 'this is our last day, and high time it was; but we mustn't let it be blank, if we can 'elp it—so let 's try Sywell Plantation—the grass at all ewents will carry a scent, and I *should* like to hear the Jenny Linds again afore we shut up, if it was only for five minutes.'

Out went the horns—Mr. Jorrocks determined to have a blow, if he could have nothing else, and the hounds came straggling out of cover, some lying down at his horse's heels, others staring listlessly about.

'Never saw such a slack pack in my life,' exclaimed Captain Shortflat, eyeing them as he spoke: 'I wonder what Scrutator would say if he saw them! Never saw such a listless lot of animals—glad I've not wasted my season by hunting with them.'

Captain Shortflat's opinion was caught by

Master Weekly (at home for the measles), who immediately sported it as his own to his school-fellow, Master Walker (at home for the hooping-cough); and it at length coming to Mr. Bateman's ears, he immediately attributes their slackness to the fact of their being fed on meal before hunting, which of course he considered was done to save flesh, and thereupon Mr. Jor ›cks is voted an uncommon great screw. Meanwhile our master, unconscious of the verdict, goes on at a very easy pace, feeling that a hot sun and a red coat are incompatible.

Sywell Plantations are blank, Layton Spinney ditto; then they take a three-miles' saunter to Simonswood, where they find a hare, and at two o'clock Mr. Jorrocks announces that he will draw Warrington Banks, which is the last cover in his draw, and then give in. Some sportsmen go home, others go on, among the number Captain Shortflat, who meditates an article in *Bell's Life* on 'Slackness in general, and Handley Cross slackness in particular.'

The sun is very powerful, and Mr. Jorrocks gives his hounds a lap at a stream before putting them into cover. Warrington Banks are irregularly fringed with copsewood, intermixed with broom and blackthorn: lying warm to the sun, the grass grows early, and old Priestess and Rummager feather across a glade almost immediately on entering. Presently there is a challenge—another—then a third, and a chorus swells. Mr. Jorrocks listens with delight, for though a kill is hopeless, still a find is fine—Captain Shortflat turns pale.

The hounds work on, bristling into the thick of the cover. Now they push through an almost impenetrable thicket, and cross a ride beyond. The chorus increases, but the hounds move not. '*Who-hoop! it's a kill.*'

Now Pigg jumps off his horse, and leaving him to chance, bounds overhead among the underwood. His cap-ton is just visible as he scrambles about in search of the place. 'To the right!' exclaims Mr. Jorrocks, seeing him blindly

pushing the wrong way—'make for the big hash atop of the crag and you'll have 'em.'

On Pigg goes, swimming as it were, through the lofty gorse and brushwood, and his well-known who-hoop! sounds from the bottom of the crag.

'Bravo!' exclaims Mr. Jorrocks, chucking his hat in the air. (He could not afford to kick out the crown.)

'Delightful!' lisps Captain Shortflat, wringing Mr. Jorrocks's hand.

'A glorious finish!' rejoined Mr. Jorrocks, pocketing his wig.

'Charming, indeed!' exclaims Captain Shortflat, resolving to call it twenty minutes.

'Catch Pigg's horse!' cries Mr. Jorrocks to a boy, the animal having taken advantage of the commotion to make his way to the well.

After a longish pause, during which there appeared to be a considerable scuffle going on, Pigg's voice is at length heard calling his hounds out of cover; and as his head pops above the

bushes, Mr. Jorrocks exclaims, 'Is't a dog, Pigg?'

'Yeas,' replies James,—'a banger tee.'

'Capital, indeed!' lisps Captain Shortflat; 'I'll take a [illegible]d, if you please.'

'There arn't none!' exclaims James Pigg, appearing with his purple-tailed coat torn in three places, and several of the hounds bleeding about the mouth. 'Hounds were sae desp'rate savish, thought they'd eat me'; adding, with a wink, in an undertone to his master, '*It's nobbut a hedgehog, and ar's gettin' him i' my pocket!*'

Captain Shortflat, however, is so delighted with the kill and with his own keenness in having stayed, that he forthwith lugs out five shillings for James Pigg, declaring it was perfectly marvellous that hounds should be able to run on such a day—let alone kill; that he never saw a pack behave better in his life—'Uncommon keen, to be sure!' repeated he; 'declare the tips of their tails are red with blood.'

THE WANING SEASON

The last day closes—Mr. Jorrocks lingers on the ride, eyeing his hounds coming to the horn, till at last all are there, and he has no other excuse for staying; with a pensive air he then turns his horse's head for Handley Cross.

THE END

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